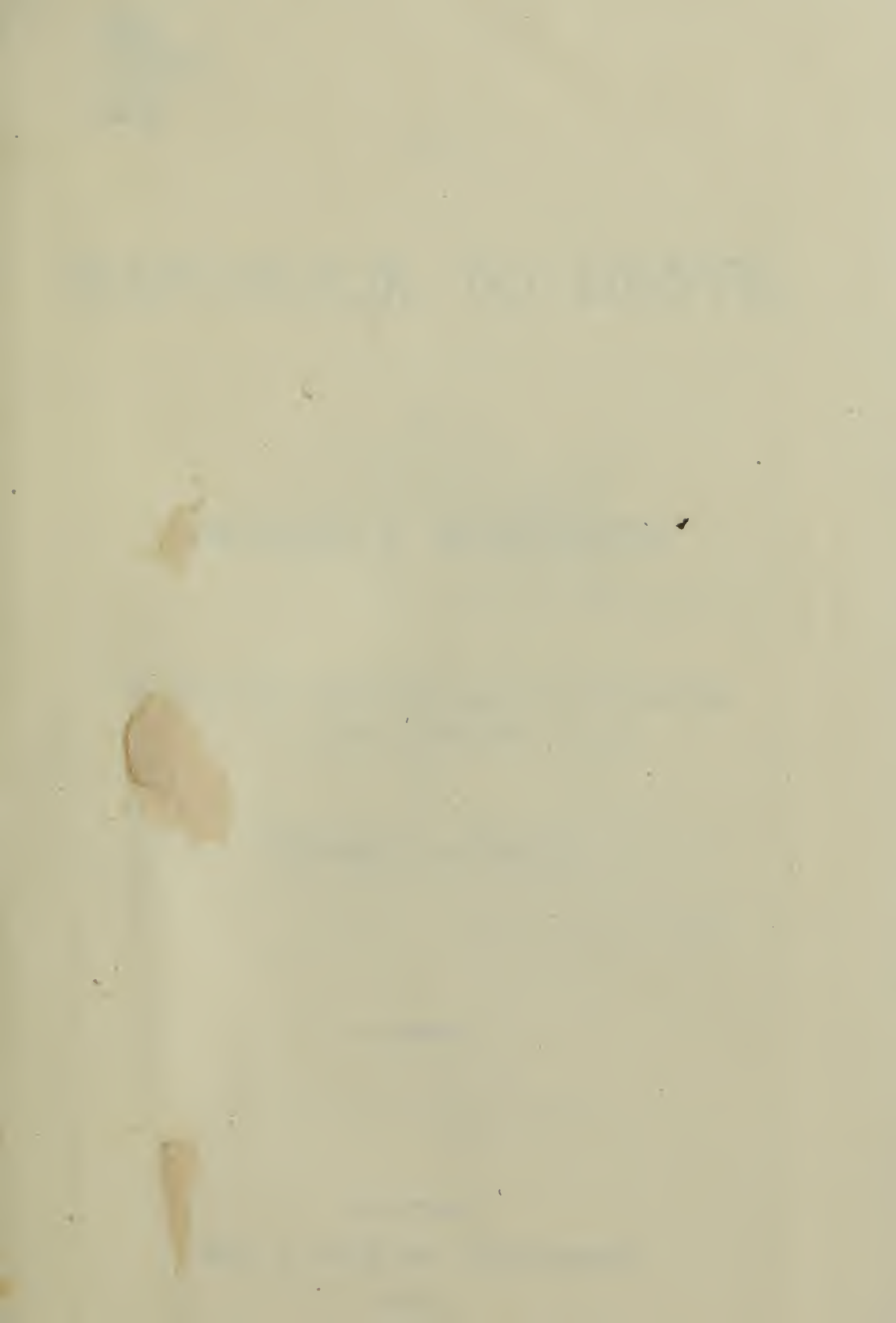




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A

# HANDBOOK TO DANTE.

BY

GIOVANNI A. SCARTAZZINI.

*TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN, WITH NOTES  
AND ADDITIONS,*

BY

THOMAS DAVIDSON.



BOSTON:  
GINN & COMPANY, PUBLISHERS.  
1887.

Fuss' io pur lui! c' a tal fortuna nato  
Per l' aspro esilio suo, con la virtute,  
Dare' del mondo il più felice stato.

MICHELANGELO.

Se par non ebbe il suo esilio indegno  
Simil uom nè maggior non nacque mai.

ID.

O Re del canto che più alto mira!

CARDUCCI.

Son chiesa e impero una ruina mesta  
Cui sorvola il tuo canto e a 'l ciel resona:  
Muor Giove, e l' inno del poeta resta.

ID.

His greatness has, in all senses, concentrated itself into fiery emphasis and depth. He is world-great, not because he is world-wide, but because he is world-deep. Through all objects he pierces as it were down into the heart of Being. I know nothing so intense as Dante. . . . I know not in the world an affection equal to that of Dante.

CARLYLE.

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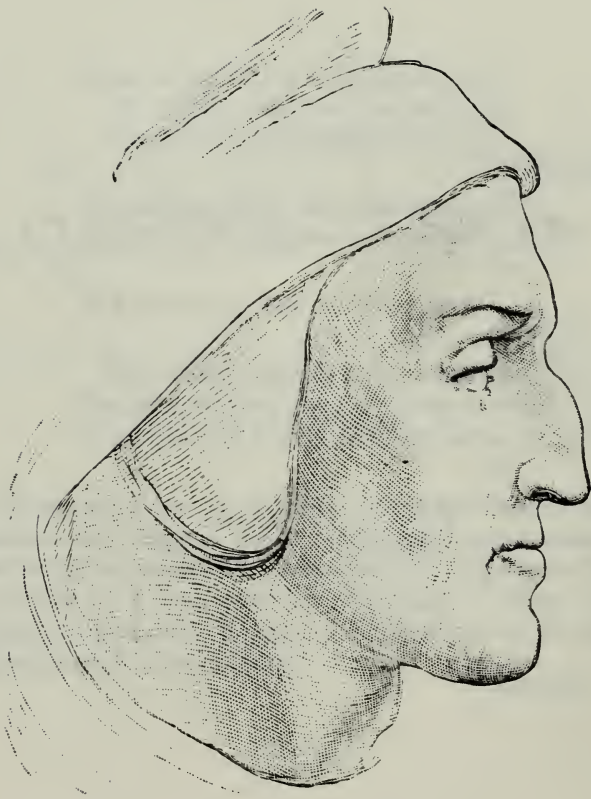
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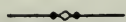
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1887



DANTE.

(From a drawing ascribed to Masaccio, Munich.)

## PREFACE.



LAST summer, while preparing some lectures on Dante, I was struck with the fact that there did not exist in English any *Handbook* to Dante, any book calculated to furnish intending students of his works with the necessary preparatory information, historical, bibliographical, biographical, and literary. My first impulse was to attempt the compilation of such a book, which seemed called for by the daily-increasing interest in the great Christian poet ; but, on reflection, it seemed to me that I might obtain a better result, by translating some Italian or German manual, and making such additions as would suit it to the needs of English-speaking students. This I have now done, having selected for translation the Dante-Manual which finds most favor in Italy, which is the work of one of the best Dante-scholars of our time, and which seems to me almost a model for a *Handbook*. My own additions, which, for the most part, take the form of foot-notes, included in brackets, will, it is hoped, add to the value of the work, and supplement certain one-sided views held by Dr. Scartazzini.



The chief defect of the Italian work is a tendency, on the part of the author, to present Dante otherwise than he was, and otherwise than he wished to be presented to the world, to make a kind of Puritanical Milton out of him, whereas, in fact, he was rather a Catholic, Mediæval Goethe, a man with many faults and weaknesses, but, withal, a noble, an honest, and a thoroughly earnest man. I have tried, by means of foot-notes, to remedy the defect, at the risk, I am well aware, of being reckoned among the slanderers of Dante. I can hope for sympathy only from the unbiassed lovers of the naked truth.

In preparing the notes to the present work, I have been very much struck with the fact, that there does not exist, in any language, any really good edition of Dante's Minor Works (except *The New Life*), or any critical, impartial life of him. Should this work give an impetus to the study of Dante in America, I hope to supply both these deficiencies in our literature.

THOMAS DAVIDSON.

ORANGE, N. J., Christmas, 1886.

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PART I.



DANTE'S LIFE.



## CHAPTER I.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY.



§ 1. SOURCES. — In undertaking to study seriously the story of Dante's life, to what sources must the student look? Many, indeed, and diverse in character, as well as in historic value, are the works which he will have to peruse. Among these, the first place must be assigned to the Poet's own works. It is a principle, generally known and recognized, that, in order to know a writer, it is necessary, above all, to know his writings, these being usually the primitive source of all knowledge of the man, — the most faithful mirror of his character and of his manner of thinking. In the various creations of this sublime genius, we possess not only a genuine portrait of his personality, and an authentic history of the gradual development of his thought, but also a store of precious information with regard to the external circumstances of his life. Beginning with *The New Life*, in which the youthful poet tells, in poetic and allegoric form, the story of his early loves, and ending with the *Quaestio de Aqua et Terra*, the last work which came from Dante's hand, we find everywhere in his writings so many biographical notices and so many allusions to the vicissitudes of the author's life,



that a biography based solely upon these writings, such as has already been attempted, would furnish us with all the essential points in it. Thus, the entire works of Dante must be considered as the chief source of the history of his life, both internal and external, and to them, above all, the biographer and the student must have recourse. At the same time, such biographers and students must never forget that these works are works of art, in which two elements, or constituent parts,—the one historical, the other poetical and allegorical,—require to be carefully distinguished; and that it is only by seriously studying what Dante himself called the art of stripping the poet's words of their figurative dress and rhetorical coloring that their true meaning can be reached.

With regard to the principal and more noteworthy editions of the works of Dante, we shall give such information as seems to us necessary, in the paragraphs devoted to the works themselves.

Of the next greatest importance are those contemporary documents which relate, directly or indirectly, to the Poet and his family. The number of these has been considerably augmented in recent years, and there is room for hope that not a few more may still be recovered from the darkness in which they have perhaps lain buried for centuries. A complete collection of the authentic documents relating to Dante Alighieri, his ancestors and his descendants, has never been made, and, indeed, is a great *desideratum*. Those known in

their time were carefully collected by Pelli, and afterwards by Fraticelli, and published in works which we shall cite further on. The documents, by no means few in number, discovered since the publication of Fraticelli's work, are at present scattered through various volumes, pamphlets, and reviews, so that it is not easy to obtain a complete knowledge of them. Besides a certain number published by Lord Vernon, Milanesi, and others, several important documents are to be found in the following works :—

*Della Casa di Dante.* A Report made to the Council General of Florence, with Documents. Florence, 1865, 8vo.

Cavattoni Cesare : Hitherto unpublished Documents relating to some of Dante's Descendants, in the *Albo Dantesco Veronese*. Verona, 1865, 8vo, pp. 347-424.

Del Lungo, Isidoro : *Dell' Esilio di Dante.* A Lecture. Florence, 1881, 12mo, pp. 83-208. Compare also the other work by the same author, *Dino Compagni e la sua Cronica*. Florence, 1879 sqq., 3 vols., 8vo.

After the study of the works of Dante, and of all authentic documents relating to him, must follow that of the ancient commentators on *The Divine Comedy*. This poem, being entirely unique in its vast universality, which embraces heaven and earth, and the Poet taking frequent occasion therein to speak of himself and of the circumstances of his life, those ancient expositors, in commenting upon his "strange verses," could not help telling what they knew of him. The information which they give is all the more precious, the more nearly

they were contemporaneous with Dante. Thus, the unknown author of the so-called "*Best*" commentary affirms that he knew the great Poet personally, and tells us, among other things, that he had heard Dante say that never, for the sake of a rhyme, had he said other than he meant to say. Nevertheless, we should be mistaken, if we were to believe that the ancient commentaries contained material sufficient for a life of Dante. As far as biography is concerned, the long and laborious, but indispensable, task of reading these commentaries affords but meagre results. The personal matter contained in these bulky volumes is small, and, in addition to that, it must be used with great caution, since, in not a few instances, it has its origin in a particular mode of interpreting the lines of *The Divine Comedy*, instead of being collateral information from an independent source. How little, in general, the ancient commentators of Dante knew, or cared to know, respecting the historical facts of his life, may be judged from this, that they do not agree even with regard to matters that might be called elementary; for example, in regard to Beatrice, whom some of them hold to be a real woman of flesh and blood, while others consider her a mere allegory, the incarnation of an idea.

The necessary bibliographical information with regard to the ancient commentaries on *The Divine Comedy* will be given further on, in the proper place. In regard to the historical value of these commentaries, see the monograph of Carl Hegel: *Ueber den historischen Werth der älteren Dante-Commentare*. Leipzig, 1878, 8vo.



Among the sources of the history of Dante's life must be reckoned also his ancient biographers. The first place among these belongs to the famous chronicler Giovanni Villani, a contemporary and a neighbor of Dante's. This author dedicated to his great fellow-citizen an entire chapter of his chronicle (Book IV, chap. 136). It has been not unfairly said that Giovanni Villani, in the little that he wrote on Dante, is, beyond question, the most trustworthy, or, rather, the only trustworthy one among all Dante's biographers. And it was really a misfortune that the later, as well as the modern, biographers of Dante, drew their information neither from the works of Dante, nor from contemporary documents, nor from ancient commentators, nor from the veracious contemporary chronicler and fellow-citizen of Dante, but from a work, which, in spite of its undeniable merits, did not deserve the credit it has received. Giovanni Boccaccio wrote, to use his own words, a "Short Treatise in Praise of Dante," the most extended of all the ancient biographies of the Poet, the principal foundation on which nearly all the subsequent biographical structures have been raised. The Dante currently known, down even to the present day, is essentially the Dante depicted by the garrulous Certaldese. Different and divergent have been, are, and will be, the judgments of different and divergent writers with regard to the historic value of Boccaccio's *Life of Dante*. Some have praised it as a work of unique merit, and as a perfectly trustworthy source for the history of Dante's life;

others have decried it as a mere historical romance, the work rather of a declaimer and a rhetorician than of a careful biographer. If we study it seriously in the light of a sane criticism, we shall find ourselves, however reluctantly, compelled, in the main, to take part with the latter, and this, too, in spite of the fact that we owe to Messer Giovanni not a little information, some of which is precious. Indeed, we should have wilfully to close our eyes, if we were not to see that the garrulous Certaldese has nothing in the world of the conscientious accuracy of the serious historian, and that, if he did not invent the facts which he relates, in order to add weight to his declamations, as certain too rigorous critics have not hesitated to accuse him of having done, he certainly took no manner of care to verify the historical truth and accuracy of the facts related by him. Whatever view others may take of this work, all serious critics have, for some time, agreed that it must be used with great caution, that nothing must be adopted from it without criticism, and that the assertions of the Certaldese must not be accepted as historic facts, without the fullest and freest criticism and the utmost reserve.

Of Boccaccio's *Life of Dante* we possess two texts, the second of which, more compendious and less known than the other, is generally supposed to have been put together by some author of whose personality, date, and place of habitation we have no certain knowledge. Some persons, on the other hand, imagine that both the texts are Boccaccio's work, and that the second is a mere abridgment and modification of the first.

This view, recently defended with much acumen by Scheffer-Boichorst, seems altogether inadmissible. In the fourteenth century it was not the custom to recast a work for a second edition, and the manner in which Boccaccio refers to his little work in his unfinished *Commentary* on *The Divine Comedy* justifies us in concluding that he knew only one text of his "Short Treatise in Praise of Dante Alighieri."

Less important is the *Life of Dante* by Messer Filippo Villani, a nephew of the great chronicler, and a celebrated lawyer, who lectured on *The Divine Comedy* in the school of Florence. Drawing chiefly on Boccaccio, whom he sometimes contradicts, Villani composed but a meagre compendium, in which there hardly occurs a single piece of information not to be found in more ancient works. It having occurred to Leonardo Bruni d' Arezzo, secretary to the Florentine republic and a famous literary man of the fifteenth century, that Boccaccio had written of the life and character of Dante as if he had been writing about Filocopo, Filostrato, or Fiammetta, made up his mind, for his own pleasure, to write anew the life of Dante, giving more attention to worthy things, not in order to derogate from Boccaccio, but rather to supplement him. Bruni's *Life of Dante* is unquestionably of greater historic value than Boccaccio's, unquestionably the best composed up to that time.

The *Life of Dante* by Giannozzo Manetti, though more prolix, is substantially nothing more than a compilation from the lives of Boccaccio and Bruni. The same is



true of the brief, compendious biographies compiled by Siccone Polentano, by Domenico di Maestro Bandino d' Arezzo, by Landino, by Valutello, by Daniello, etc. There are some new things in the work of Giovan Mario Filelfo, a literary man of the fifteenth century; but they are all mere products of his own imagination. The Marquis Giangiacomo Trivulzio was entirely right, when he said that to cite Filelfo as an authority was like citing the author of Don Quixote as a witness to an historic fact. It is enough to remember that Filelfo, having probably never seen the treatises *De Monarchia* and *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, and, being loath to confess his own ignorance, had the audacity to invent beginnings to them, which, of course, have nothing in common with the beginnings of the two works of the great Father Alighieri.

Villani, Giovanni: *Cronica*. Venice, 1537, fol. Frequently reprinted. The best edition is that of Magheri, Florence, 1823, 8 vols., 8vo. A good, cheap edition, based upon the Florentine edition of 1844, is that by A. Racheli, Trieste, 1857, 4to.

Boccaccio, Giovanni: *Vita di Dante*. First published along with *The Divine Comedy*, by Wendelin of Speyer, Venice, 1477, fol. Reprinted times without number. The most correct edition is that by Gaëtano Milanesi, in the first volume of Boccaccio's *Commentary to The Divine Comedy*, Florence, 1863, 12mo.

The biographies of Dante by Filippo Villani, Leonardo Bruni, and Giannozzo Manetti are to be found all together in the volume, *Philippi Villani Liber de Civitatis Florentiæ famosis Civibus*. *Ex Codice Mediceo Laurentiano nunc primum editus et*

*de Florentinorum Litteratura Principes fere synchroni Scriptores denuo in lucem prodeunt.* Cura et Studio G. C. Galletti, Florence, 1847, 4to. Bruni's work was first printed at Perugia, by S. Zecchini's heirs, 1672, 4to, and is prefixed to many editions of *The Divine Comedy*. Manetti's was first published by Mehus, Florence, 1747. Filelfo's wretched work was printed by Moreno, Florence, 1828, 8vo.

§ 2. MODERN BIOGRAPHERS OF DANTE. — Innumerable are the names of those who in recent times have written on Dante's life, both in Italy and abroad. It is no part of our purpose to give a full list of these here, but merely to point out the principal and most important among them. Having collected nearly all the documents known up to that time, Giuseppe Pelli, a Florentine patrician, laid the foundations for a scientific biography of the great poet. But, if Pelli showed great diligence in his work, he, on the other hand, failed to exercise the necessary criticism, drawing his materials from every quarter, without despising even the impostures of the miserable Filelfo. The Marquis Dionisi of Verona and Count Carlo Troya, in their writings, made important contributions, partly of things that had previously been too much neglected, to the history of Dante's life and times. Great and well-deserved success attended Count Cesare Balbo's *Life of Dante*, hitherto the best work of this kind. Superficial and tiresome, on the contrary, is Melchiorre Missirini's bulky volume, which, perhaps, just because it is so light and superficial, had the good luck to reach a

fourth edition. Resuming and completing Pelli's work, Pietro Fraticelli wrote a Life of Dante (*Storia della Vita di Dante Alighieri*), more important on account of the documents contained in it than of the work of the diligent compiler. More compendious biographies we have in great number, both in special treatises and forming introductions to different editions of *The Divine Comedy*. But, in all this multitude of short biographies, it would be hard to find one that deserved any attention, or that rose above the mediocrity and superficiality common to so many books and pamphlets on Dante, whose number, unfortunately, is growing from year to year.

Pelli, Giuseppe: *Memorie per servire alla Vita di Dante Alighieri ed alla Storia della sua Famiglia*. Second edition; much enlarged. Florence, 1823, 8vo.

Dionisi, Gian Giacopo: *Preparazione istorica e critica alla nuova Edizione di Dante Alighieri*. Verona, 1806, 2 vols., 8vo.

Troya, Carlo: *Del Veltro Allegorico di Dante*. Florence, 1826, 8vo. — *Del Veltro Allegorico dei Ghibellini*. Naples, 1856, 8vo.

Balbo, Cesare: *Vita di Dante*. Turin, 1839, 2 vols., 8vo. Several times reprinted.<sup>1</sup> Compare Todeschini, *Osservazioni e Censure alla Vita di Dante scritta dal Conte Cesare Balbo*, in his *Scritti su Dante*, vol. I, pp. 261–387.

Missirini, Melchiorre: *Vita di Dante*. Fourth edition, with additions, edited and unedited, by the Author. Milan and Venice, 1844, 8vo.

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[<sup>1</sup> Translated by Mrs. Bunbury.]



Fratricelli, Pietro : *Storia della Vita di Dante Alighieri, compilata sui Documenti in parte raccolti da Giuseppe Pelli, in parte inediti*. Florence, 1861, 12mo.

Numerous biographies of Dante are to be found, not only in Italian literature, but also in the literatures of the other peoples of Europe. But, with the exception of a few works coming from learned Germany, we find hardly any original treatises that are more than compilations, more or less accurate, more or less superficial. Among biographical works in English, we may mention those of Véricour, Mignaty, Botta, and Rossetti. France has mediocre biographies by Chabanon, Artaud, Magnier, Dauphin, and others. In German literature, there comes first, leaving all works of the same kind far behind it, the learned and very accurate work of Blanc, in Ersch & Gruber's gigantic *Encyclopædie*.

The most complete and best known biographies of Dante in German are those of Wegele and Scartazzini. More concise and popular are the works of Ruth, Floto, Notter, etc. In the literatures of other nations we find no work on this subject deserving of notice.

Véricour, Raymond de : *The Life and Times of Dante*. London, 1858, 8vo.

Mignaty, Albana : *An Historical Sketch, illustrative of the Life and Times of Dante Alighieri*. Florence, 1865, 12mo.

Botta, Vincenzo : *Dante as Philosopher, Patriot, and Poet*. New York, 1867, 8vo.

Rossetti, Maria Francesca : *A Shadow of Dante : Being an*

*Essay towards studying Himself, his World, and his Pilgrimage.* London, 1872, 8vo.<sup>1</sup>

Chabanon, M. de : *Vie du Dante, avec une Notice détaillée de ses Ouvrages.* Paris, 1773, 8vo.

Montor, Artaud de : *Histoire de Dante Alighieri.* Paris, 1841, 8vo.

Magnier, Edmond : *Dante et le Moyen-Âge.* Paris, 1860, 8vo.

Dauphin, Henri : *Vie du Dante. Analyse de la Divine Comédie.* Paris, 1869, 8vo.

Blanc, L. G. : *Dante Alighieri nach seinem Leben und literarischen Werken geschildert.* In Ersch & Gruber's *Allgemeine Encyclopädie der Wissenschaften und Künste.* Sec. I, vol. xxiii. Leipzig, 1832, 4to, pp. 34-79.

Wegele, Franz Xaver : *Dante Alighieri's Leben und Werke, im Zusammenhange dargestellt.* 3d edit. Jena, 1879, 8vo.

Scartazzini, Giov. And. : *Dante Alighieri, seine Zeit, sein Leben, und seine Werke.* 2d edit. Frankfort-on-the-Maine, 1879, 8vo.

Ruth, Emil : *Das Leben des Dante Alighieri.* In the first volume of his *Geschichte der italienischen Poesie.* Leipzig, 1844, 8vo.

Floto, Hartwig : *Dante Alighieri, sein Leben und seine Werke.* Stuttgart, 1852, 12mo.

Notter, Friedrich : *Sechs Vorträge über Dante.* Stuttgart, 1861, 8vo.

§ 3. BIOGRAPHIC MONOGRAPHS. — With few exceptions, the modern biographies of Dante, both Italian and foreign, are merely compilations, more or less dili-

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[<sup>1</sup> Along with these deserves to be mentioned Mr. J. R. Lowell's admirable essay on *Dante*, in *Among my Books*, second series, pp. 1-124. Though containing some inaccuracies, this is the best thing on Dante in the English language.]



gent. Even in the much-lauded German works of Wegele and Scartazzini, we find very little that deserves to be considered the result of new researches. The first essentially follows in the steps of Balbo; the second, in those of Dionisi and Fraticelli. So vast is the field, and so difficult of tillage, that the powers of a single man are not at present sufficient to deal with all the parts of it equally, even were he to devote a whole lifetime to such studies. The task will be much easier in the future, when the literature on Dante shall have been enriched by a goodly number of biographical monographs. A beginning was made some time ago. Persons have begun to make researches in libraries, with the view of bringing to light authentic documents hitherto unknown, as well as to study, with set purpose and with more care than formerly, all that relates to the various circumstances of Dante's life. The scholars of two nations, the Italian and the German, are vying with each other in seeking to settle definitely the truth of the facts relating to the life and times of the great poet. For any one who desires to keep pace with the results of scientific researches in this field, it is no longer sufficient to study Dante's works and a few modern biographies: he must address himself to the not light task of perusing a couple of hundred monographs, scattered about in as many volumes, pamphlets, and magazines, Italian and foreign.

It is true that, in many cases, the net result of such labor is very meagre, and that very little is to be derived

from the study of long biographical monographs which promise all the world, while, in reality, they contain nothing that has not been said before, or else mere wild individual fancies. As names are odious, we shall not mention examples, although there is certainly no lack of them. But, alongside the chaff, we have also the good grain; alongside so much stuff that is useless and worse, we have serious and very important studies, which must not be overlooked by any one who wishes to treat of Dante's life. A list of these biographical monographs would take more room than we can afford. The more important of them will be named in their proper connection.

Since the present work cannot give bibliographical notices even approximately complete, but must confine itself to a very small selection of works likely to be of special use to the student, we must refer those who wish to know what industry has accomplished in this field to the following bibliographical works.

Batines, Columb de : *Bibliografia Dantesca, ossia Catalogo delle Edizioni, Traduzioni, Codici manoscritti e Commenti della Divina Commedia e delle Opere minori di Dante, seguito dalla Serie de' Biografi de lui*. Prato, 1845. Two large volumes, 8vo. A most careful work, indispensable to the student of Dante, but, unfortunately, unfinished.

Ferrazzi, Giuseppe Jacopo : *Bibliografia Dantesca* (forming vols. IV and V of the learned and most diligent author's *Manuale Dantesco*). Bassano, 1871-1877. Two large volumes, 12mo and 8vo. A work of marvellous erudition, but less essential to the student than the preceding.

Petzholdt, Julius : *Bibliographia Dantea ab Anno MDCCCLXV inchoata*. Dresden, 1876-1880, 8vo. Distinguished for its admirable system and scrupulous bibliographical accuracy.

Scartazzini, G. A. : *Dante in Germania. Storia letteraria e Bibliografia Dantesca alemanna dal Secolo XIV sino ai nostri Giorni*. Milan, 1881-1883. Two volumes, 4to. Contains a complete catalogue of all German publications on Dante, ancient and modern.



## CHAPTER II.

### FIRST PERIOD OF DANTE'S LIFE.



FROM HIS BIRTH TO THE DEATH OF BEATRICE.

1265-1290.

#### PERIOD OF FAITH AND INNOCENCE.

§ I. DANTE'S FAMILY. — During his ecstático-symbolic journey through the three kingdoms of eternity, Dante meets, in the heaven of Mars, his great-great-grandfather Cacciaguida, and asks him: "Tell me, who were your ancestors?" Cacciaguida replies that he and his ancestors were born in St. Peter's-gate ward,<sup>1</sup> in Florence, but that with regard to who they were, and whence they came thither, it is better to keep silence than to speak. It follows that the traditions of Dante's family did not go back beyond his great-great-grandfather, since Dante himself knew nothing further.

Cacciaguida himself tells us that his wife came from the valley of the Po; and that from her came the surname Alighieri. Boccaccio tells us: "When Cacciaguida was a youth, his parents married him to a damsel belonging to the Aldighieri family of Ferrara, — a damsel

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[<sup>1</sup> Sesto di Porta San Piero (*Parad.* XVI, 40 sqq.). Florence was originally divided into four quarters, but afterwards into sixths. Dante's sixth, or ward, was on the east side of Old Florence.]

distinguished no less for beauty and character than for nobility of origin, — with whom he lived several years, and by whom he had several children. How the rest of these were named is not known; but the mother, with a weakness common to mothers, being anxious to perpetuate the name of her ancestors, called one boy *Aldighieri*, a name afterwards, by the loss of the *d*, corrupted into *Alighieri*.” It follows that, up to the time of Cacciaguida, no family of the name of *Alighieri* existed in Florence, and, indeed, we find no traces of any Florentine family of that name. Dante’s ancestors could not yet boast of a family name, and were called merely by their Christian names, or by those of their parents, as was long the custom among people of the middle class, and very much longer among those of the lower classes.<sup>1</sup> Giovanni Villani, a most diligent collector of the memorials of his native city, and not only a fellow-citizen, but even a neighbor, of the *Alighieri*, never mentions them either among the *grande*es, or even among the notable bourgeois families, — a sure proof that the family which gave to the world Dante *Alighieri* was not only bourgeois, but likewise very obscure.

However, as is usually the case in this world, even this very obscure bourgeois family, afterwards rendered so illustrious and ennobled by Dante, had its traditions and its pretensions. It claimed the honor of being descended from the old Romans, and even had stories

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[<sup>1</sup> In some parts of Italy it is so still.]

to tell about nobility of blood, either possessed by them since the days when Florence was founded, or else acquired by an ancestor, but lost with the lapse of time, the descendants of the mythical knight Cacciaguida not having taken care to add new cloth to that mantle of nobility which adorned him,<sup>1</sup> and which he had won for his descendants. Hence, on the one hand, a contempt for nobility, in the historical sense of that term,—a contempt which found eloquent expression in the fourth treatise of *The Love-Feast*;—on the other, a contempt, mingled with hatred and envy, for the so-called “new citizens” of Florence,—a contempt which found still more eloquent expression in *The Divine Comedy*. It was Dante's own fault that these traditional fables regarding his family were not merely published to the world, but were even accepted as history and amplified by ancient and modern biographers, who have gone on romancing that Dante belonged to the grandees, that is, to the nobles or patricians of Florence, whereas the truth is, that he came of a very obscure bourgeois family.

The accounts of this family do not go back, and, even in its own traditions, did not go back, beyond the twelfth century, since, on Dante's own showing, the ancestors of Cacciaguida and his brothers, Moronto and Eliseo, were unknown. Historically, nothing is known of this Cacciaguida, further than that he was dead in 1189, and that he had two sons, Preitenitto and Ala-

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[<sup>1</sup> See *Parad.* XVI, 7 sqq.]



ghieri, or Aldighiero, who, in the year named, promised to the priest Tolomeo and his successors to cut down, whenever requested to do so, a fig-tree of theirs, which grew close to the wall of St. Martin's. Aldighiero had a son named Bellincione, who was the father of Gherardo, Brunetto, and Aldighiero, the father of Dante. In ancient documents, Bellincione is spoken of as a member of the council, and a bourgeois. Aldighiero, the father of Dante, a lawyer by profession, had, for his first wife, Lapa di Chiarissimo Cialuffi; his second wife, Dante's mother, is known only by the name of Donna Bella, probably because she was of very obscure origin. Dante had a brother, Francesco, who married Pietra di Donato Brunacci, and a sister, whose name is unknown, but who married Leone Poggi. Thus, not only Dante's ancestors, but all his nearest relatives were bourgeois.

Leonardi Bruni writes: "Before his expulsion from Florence, Dante, though by no means immensely rich, was still not poor, having a fair patrimony, sufficient to enable him to live honorably."

From documents still in existence, it is proved that Dante and his brother Francesco contracted, in the years from 1293<sup>1</sup> to 1300, debts to a considerable amount, a fact which does not appear to indicate much wealth.

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[<sup>1</sup> Here the original has 1297; but see Karl Witte's *Dante-Forschungen*, Vol. II, pp. 61 sq. From the account there given, it appears that, in the year 1300, the indebtedness of the two brothers was 930½ gold florins of Florence, or upwards of 37,000 French francs.]

Todeschini, Gius. : *Scritti su Dante*, I, 263 sqq., 344-360.

Scartazzini, G. A. : *Dante's Abstammung und Adel (Abhandlungen über Dante Alighieri)*, I, pp. 1-53.

Fenaroli : *La Stirpe, il Nome di Famiglia, e la Data del Nascimento di Dante Alighieri*. Turin, 1882, 8vo.

P. P. : *Notizie genealogiche della Famiglia Alighieri, estratte dal Litta ed altri*. Florence, 1865, 32mo.

Passerini, Luigi : *Della Famiglia di Dante (Dante e il suo Secolo)*. Florence, 1865-66, 4to, pp. 33-78.

Frullani, Emilio, and Gargani : *Genealogia della Famiglia Alighieri (Della Casa di Dante)*, I, 57.

§ 2. DATE OF DANTE'S BIRTH. — All Dante's biographers and commentators fix the date of his birth in the month of May, 1265, and the poet himself confirms this date in several passages of his works. In *The New Life*, he says he was born a year before Beatrice, who must have been born in 1266, since she was twenty-four years old when she died on the 9th June, 1290. In *The Love-Feast*, he tells us that he had reached the culmination of his life, when, in 1301, he left Florence, never to return, which means that he lived in Florence till his thirty-fifth year. And, according to *The Divine Comedy*, he was, in the year 1300, the year when his vision is supposed to have taken place, "midway on the journey of our life," that is, in his thirty-fifth year; and was born when the sun was in the constellation Gemini, that is, between the 18th May and the 9th June, 1265. The chronicler Giovanni Villani states that Dante died "at the age of about fifty-six years."



Indeed, if he was born in the second half of May, or in the first days of June, 1265, he must have been fifty-six years and about four months old when he died at Ravenna, on the 14th of September, 1321. In one word, all accounts, whether in documents, in his own works, or in the writings of his biographers and commentators, agree in confirming the ancient and invariable tradition that Dante was born in May, 1265.

But, since it is certain that Dante was born in Florence, we are met by the objection that he could not have been born there in 1265, because his parents and relatives belonged to the Guelph party, and the Guelphs were at that time in banishment, and did not return to Florence until the following year. This objection has very little weight, because we have no certain information that the father of Dante was among the banished Guelphs, and, even if he was, this does not in the smallest degree exclude the possibility that Madonna Bella may have found shelter among her relatives in Florence, and that the birth took place there. Women were not included in decrees of banishment.

Peoples have always had a fondness for surrounding the cradles of their great men with miraculous events. The garrulous Boccaccio tells us a long story about a miraculous dream, in which Dante's mother, shortly before his birth, saw what the fruit of her womb was destined to be. But Boccaccio's story has no other value than that of a dream. It is recorded also that Brunetto Latini, observing the state of the heavens at the mo-

ment of Dante's birth, cast his horoscope, and declared that he would be a man of great genius and learning, and that he would win immortal fame. But in 1265 Brunetto was not in Florence to work this miracle.

Grion, Giusto : *Che l' Anno della Visione di Dante è il 1301, e il Di natale il 18 maggio 1267.* Udine, 1865, 8vo.

Labruzzi di Nexima, Francesco : *Quando nacque Dante Alighieri?* Two studies published in the *Propugnatore* at Bologna, 1877-79. Vol. X, pt. II, pp. 3-16 ; Vol. XII, pt. I, pp. 313-24.

Scartazzini, G. A. : *Wann wurde Dante geboren?* *Abhandlungen*, I, 54-97.

[Witte, Karl : *Vermuthungen über Dante's Geburtstag*, in *Dante-Forschungen*, Vol. II, pp. 28-31.]

§ 3. DANTE'S NATURAL GIFTS. — Dante Alighieri belonged to that small number of men to whom Providence confided ten talents, and whom Nature loaded with her gifts. In all his works, whether in poetry or prose, we recognize a man of extraordinary depth and delicacy of feeling, and of marvellously keen intellect. Of all the gifts of heart and head, not one is lacking in him. He brought with him into the world the will and the inclination to dive into the deep and not over-clear waters of mysticism, as well as to make his tabernacle in the arid, sandy wastes of scholasticism. The gifts of his heart could not do otherwise than incline him to the supernatural ecstasies which lay in the tendencies of his time ; and, on the other hand, his acute intellect

could not fail to be delighted, not only with the excessively subtle occupations of scholasticism, but perhaps also with the speculations of that philosophy which was in vogue in his time, — which called itself Epicureanism, and was Materialism.

Allusions to Dante's natural gifts are not rare in his works, especially in his chief poem. It is by "loftiness of genius" <sup>1</sup> that he passes through the blind world: he has but "to follow his star, and he cannot miss a glorious harbor." <sup>2</sup> The beneficent influences of the heavens and the free gift of divine graces conspired to render him "virtually such that every right disposition would have made admirable proof in him." <sup>3</sup> But let us listen to his earliest biographers.

Boccaccio says: "Moreover, this poet was endowed with wondrous capacity, with a most retentive memory, and with a perspicacious intellect. With the loftiest genius and with subtle

[<sup>1</sup>                    Se per questo cieco  
Carcere vai per *altezza d'ingegno*,  
Mio figlio ov' è?                    — *Hell*, X, 58 sq.]

[<sup>2</sup>                    Se tu sègui tua stella  
Non puoi fallire a glorioso porto. — *Hell*, XV, 55 sq.]

[<sup>3</sup> Non pur per ovra delle ruote magne  
\*       \*       \*       \*       \*       \*  
Ma per larghezza di grazie divine  
\*       \*       \*       \*       \*       \*  
Questi fu tal nella sua vita nuova  
Virtualmente, che ogni abito destro  
Fatto avrebbe in lui mirabil prova.  
— *Purgatory*, XXX, 109 sqq.]



inventiveness he was also gifted. He likewise took delight in being solitary and away from society, so that his contemplations might not be interrupted; and, even if a person to whom he was attached came to him, when he was among people, and asked him a question, he would never reply until he had either stopped or condemned his imagination; and this frequently happened to him when requests were made to him at table, on a journey with companions, and elsewhere. To his studies he was most devoted — so much so that, during the the time which he set apart for them, he could not be withdrawn from them by any news that he might hear.”

Leonardo Bruni writes: “In his childhood, being liberally nurtured,<sup>1</sup> and entrusted to teachers of letters, he very soon gave evidence of extraordinary powers, wonderfully adapted to excellent things.”

While the particulars of Dante's life and its external vicissitudes (particulars which, after all, are not of much moment, since, for the thorough understanding of a man and his works, it is all but indifferent whether we know, or not, where he passed this or that day or month of his life), have been so much written about, the study of his inner life and of his intellectual development has been almost entirely neglected by Dante-scholars. On this most important subject we have not a single monograph, unless we reckon as such some slight things by the present writer: —

*Zu Dante's innerer Entwicklungsgeschichte*, in the *Fahr-buch der deutschen Dante-Gesellschaft*, Vol. III. Leipzig, 1871, pp. 1-39.

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[<sup>1</sup> Dante himself, in the beginning of the *Quaestio de Aqua et Terra*, tells us that “from childhood up he was continually nurtured in the love of the truth” (*Quum in amore veritatis a pueritia mea continue sim nutritus, non sustinui*, etc.). See Pt. II, Chap. IV, § 6.]



*Zu Dante's Seelengeschichte, Fahrbuch*, u. s. w., Vol. IV, Leipzig, 1877, pp. 143-238; and also in *Studien über Dante*, pp. 3-97.

*Dante's geistige Entwicklung*, in *Abhandlungen*, I, pp. 98-243.<sup>1</sup>

§ 4. DANTE'S EDUCATION. — Although a genius owes many and perhaps the best things to Nature and to his own efforts, it is not, therefore, less true that, for the development of his intellect, the influence of the education which he received in the years of his infancy and childhood is great, and, in most cases, decisive; so great that a philosopher of the first rank did not hesitate to assert that a man is simply the product of the education which he has received. Hence, in order to know a man fully, we must know who were his educators and teachers, and what sort of education he received. In Dante's case, unfortunately, we cannot give satisfactory answers to these questions, so little do we know with certainty regarding these matters. Respecting Dante's early home-life, his first impressions, his instruction, etc., we know nothing certain, and can only indulge in conjectures more or less probable. In all his writings, Dante maintained complete silence on these subjects. When he recalls the "dear and good paternal image" <sup>2</sup> of Ser Brunetto Latini, who "in the world, from time to time,

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[<sup>1</sup> To these may be added Carlyle's powerful chapter on Dante in *Lectures on Heroes* (III).]

[<sup>2</sup> "La cara e buona imagine paterna." — *Hell*, XV, 83.]

taught him how man himself eterns"<sup>1</sup> (renders eternal), his words can scarcely have the meaning attributed to them by biographers, ancient and modern, viz., that Ser Brunetto was Dante's teacher. Exactly in the same way, when Dante calls Guido Guinicelli his "father and the father of all those who have ever written sweet and elegant rhymes of love,"<sup>2</sup> we must not conclude that Guido shared with Ser Brunetto the glory of having been Dante's teacher. Banished from Florence in 1260, Ser Brunetto betook himself to France, and does not seem to have returned till about the time when Dante was almost on the threshold of the second period of his life. The testimony of Dante with regard to the "dear paternal image" of Ser Brunetto must, therefore, relate, not to instruction given him in his boyhood by the Florentine Secretary, but to encouragement and teaching generously bestowed later on, when the young poet already felt in his heart the ardent desire to immortalize himself.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, with regard to

[<sup>1</sup> Nel mondo ad ora ad ora  
M' insegnate come l' uom s' eterna. — *Hell*, XV, 84 sq.]

[<sup>2</sup> Il padre  
Mio, e degli altri miei miglior, che mai  
Rime d' amore usâr dolci e leggiadre.  
— *Purgatory*, XXVI, 97 sqq.]

[<sup>3</sup> The author, in his note on Brunetto Latini (*Hell*, XV, 30), takes an entirely different, and, I think, a more correct view. After telling us that Brunetto was born about 1220, and died at Florence in 1294, he gives some account of his career, and then adds: "In the introduction to his commentary on Cicero's *De Inventione*, translated by him into Italian, he himself says: 'This Brunetto Latini, on account of the war between the parties in

the higher schools and universities attended by Dante, we are still essentially in the dark. His biographers and commentators send him to Bologna, to Padua, to Paris, and even to Oxford, to study the different branches of human knowledge. But the interminable disputes with regard to the dates of these journeys are alone sufficient to show how little confidence is to be placed in such statements. The chronicler Giovanni Villani, the best of our authorities, is perhaps nearest the truth when he tells us that Dante, "when expelled and banished from Florence, went to the school of Bologna, and afterwards to Paris and several other parts of the world."

But, though we are destitute of all information of a positive and authentic kind with regard to the education

Florence, was banished from Florence, when his party — the Guelph — which held to the Pope and the Church of Rome, was expelled and banished from the land in the year 1260. He then went to France to seek his fortune.' In 1269, or thereabouts, he returned to his native place. *He was the teacher of Dante and of Guido Cavalcanti.* See Ug. Verini, *De Illustribus Urbis Florentiae Viris*, Lib. II: —

" 'Nam de fonte tuo mansuras ebibit undas  
Dantes; et Guido, praedocto carmine vates,  
Pimpeas potavit aquas de fonte Latino.' "

If the above dates are at all correct, it is quite evident that Brunetto might very well have been Dante's teacher. And there can be little doubt that he was. There is a singular parallelism between the lives of the two men. Both were exiles through party strife; both strove for literary fame by the same methods; both lived in Paris; each was a leading man in his own generation. Dante admits having learnt from Brunetto how to attain immortal fame in literature. — "*M' insegnavate come l' uom s' eterna*" (*Hell*, XV, 85, on which see our author's note).]



which the great poet received in his infancy and boyhood, we have, nevertheless, one most important document—so important as largely to counterbalance all those which we might desire to have. This invaluable document is the man himself, as he appears in his works. There we see a man of information no less vast than profound; a man possessing all the science of his time, accurate, and scrupulously exact in small things as well as in great. There we find a proud-spirited man, nourishing in his soul the most overweening contempt for all that degrades and disgraces a man, not only in the eyes of his fellow-men, but also before his own internal judge. Here is a man of noble haughtiness, who renounces his dearest and sweetest hopes, rather than humble himself before overbearing injustice. Here is a man who, being no “timid friend of the truth,” openly manifests what “to many is a savor of strong bitterness,” in order not to “lose life among posterity.”<sup>1</sup> Here is a man who loves his own fame, indeed, but still more the good of his fellow-men, and who writes his immortal works in order to help them, by withdrawing them from the state of misery, and directing them toward the state of bliss. This man, we say, could not

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Si io 'l ridico,  
A molti fia savor di forte agrume;  
E s' io al vero son timido amico,  
Temo di perder vita tra coloro  
Che questo tempo chiameranno antico.

— *Paradise*, XVII, 116 sqq.]



have been what he was, if, in his tender years, anything had been neglected in his education. A field in which such fruits ripen must needs have been cultivated early with the greatest care and with the most tender and anxious solicitude.<sup>1</sup>

Leonardo Bruni tells us that Dante lost his father in his boyhood. He is supposed to have died about 1275. Boccaccio tell us: "Having already, in his earliest boyhood, learnt the elements of letters, he did not, after the fashion of the nobles of the present day, give himself up to childish frolics and to indolence, dawdling at his mother's skirts, but, in his own native city, he devoted his boyhood with steady zeal to the liberal arts, and in these he became marvellously expert. And, as his mind and genius grew with his years, he devoted himself, not to lucrative studies, which everybody runs after nowadays, but to a laudable love for everlasting fame: despising transitory riches, he gave himself freely up to a thorough study of poetic fictions and the theory of them. In doing so, he made himself intimately familiar with Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Statius, and every other famous poet; and he was not content with simply knowing these, but, in lofty song, he sought to imitate them. And, having reached the insight that works of poetry are not mere vain fables or marvels, as many foolish people suppose, but that they hold, concealed within them, some of the sweetest fruits of historical and philosophical truth—for which reason it is impossible to become a perfect master of poetical invention without a knowledge of history and of philosophy, moral and natural—making a wise division of his time, he set to work to understand history by himself, and philosophy under different doctors, not without long fatigue and study. And, being capti-

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[<sup>1</sup> See Dante's direct confirmation of this, p. 24, note.]

vated with the sweetness of knowing the truth of the things laid up in the heavens, and, finding in this life no other occupation dearer than this, he abandoned every other temporal care, and devoted himself wholly to it. And, that no part of philosophy might remain unknown to him, he penetrated, with acute genius, into the deepest deeps of theology. Nor were his efforts long in bearing fruit ; for, by regarding neither heat, nor cold, nor watching, nor hunger, nor any other bodily discomfort, he succeeded, by assiduous study, in attaining to such a knowledge of the divine essence and of the other separate intelligences as cannot be comprehended here below by human powers. And, just as he acquired different sciences at different periods of his life, so he acquired them in different schools and under different teachers. The first beginnings [of science] he learnt in his native city, and from it he went to Bologna, as to a place more fertile in such food. Later, when he was close upon old age, he went to Paris, where, having several times, with great glory to himself, taken part in disputes, he showed the loftiness of his genius, so that those who heard him cannot even now speak of it without wonder."

As every one can readily see, this is a rhetorical exercise rather than an historical narrative. And yet the picture which it offers us of Dante's culture and studies cannot certainly be far from the truth. One statement, however, is incorrect ; viz., that Dante studied philosophy under different masters at Bologna or elsewhere. By Dante's own showing (*Feast*, II, 13<sup>1</sup>), we know that he was unacquainted with [pagan] philoso-

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[<sup>1</sup> The passage here alluded to is quoted at full length below, p. 60. It seems to accord entirely with Boccaccio's account. That author nowhere says that Dante studied philosophy in his youth, and even Villani tells us that he studied at Bologna, Paris, and other places later in life. See above, p. 27. But after all, it does not follow from Dante's words that he had not studied what we should call philosophy, but merely that he had not

phy until some time after Beatrice's death, and that his studies and exercises up to about the age of twenty-seven were confined to Latin, poetry, arms, drawing, with, perhaps, music. His knowledge he acquired, in great part, by himself, studying books without guidance or direction from teachers. Thus, he testifies (*New Life*, Chap. III) that he had "*seen by himself* the art of saying words in rhyme"; so that he had no masters in the art of poetry, and, if we may believe Boccaccio,<sup>1</sup> he had likewise none in history. With regard to the question whether Dante knew Greek, we may observe that it is, in the main, an unprofitable one, the perusal of his works showing but too clearly that he did not. This, however, does not exclude the possibility that he may have taken the trouble to learn the Greek alphabet, and the meaning of certain Greek words.

Cantù, Ignazio: *Dante considerato come Uomo di Scienza*. A Lecture. Milan, 1847.

Cavedoni, Celestino: *Osservazioni Critiche intorno alla Questione se Dante sapesse il Greco*. Modena, 1860.

Todeschini, Gius: *Scritti su Dante*. I, pp. 293-305.

§ 5. EARLIEST IMPRESSIONS. — Knowing absolutely nothing of the home-life of the family in which Dante was born and bred, we cannot even guess what were the impressions which it made upon him; and we can

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studied pagan philosophy, before Beatrice's death. That Dante had some knowledge of Aristotle, even before the death of Beatrice, is plain from several passages in *The New Life*, especially for the twenty-fifth chapter, in which Aristotle is mentioned, and one of his teachings cited.]

[<sup>1</sup> "If we may believe Boccaccio," however, Dante did study philosophy under masters, at the very time when he was studying history by himself. History does not seem to have been taught in schools in Dante's time. In any case, it is certain that Dante studied philosophy with masters for about thirty months.]



only conclude, from his character and from his mode of thinking and acting, that, from his earliest infancy, he must have had before his eyes examples of a life honest, noble, severely moral, and scrupulously religious. If, moreover, we know nothing of the home-life of the family, we can readily imagine what impressions must have been made upon his mind by the lives of his fellow-citizens, their manners, and the great events of a century in which the mediæval world was dying, and the dawn of the modern world was already beginning to break. Amid the great convulsions and furious struggles of two opposing principles, he saw examples of sublime virtues, as well as of black vices; of piety, as well as of atrocious cruelty. *The Divine Comedy* is the evidence of the impressions made upon Dante by the events of his time. How profound these impressions were, we may see from the way in which he sings the tragic fate of Francesca di Rimini, and the still more tragic fate of the unhappy Count Ugolino.

In order to know Dante, as man, poet, and writer, and to understand his works, a thorough-going study of the history of his time, especially the history of Italy, and above all, of Florence, is indispensable. Dante's modern biographers are wont to treat this history at such length that their volumes contain a great deal more of the history of Florence in the time of Dante than of the history of the poet's life. But the things contained in those volumes do not relieve us from the necessity of knowing more minutely the history of Italy and Florence in the thirteenth century, by patiently studying its sources. Be-



sides the histories of Florence by Gino Capponi, the French Perrens, and others, one may consult the following: —

Arrivabene, Ferdinando: *Il Secolo di Dante. Commento storico necessario all' Intelligenza della Divina Commedia*. Udine, 1827. Several times reprinted.

Cereseto, Giambattista: *Ragionamento storico sull' Italia del Medio Evo per servire d'Introduzione alla Lettura della Divina Commedia*. Genoa, 1846.

*Dante e il suo Secolo*. Florence, 1865. Contains, among other things, several monographs on the times of Dante, by Capponi, Cantù, Carbone, Cibrario, Mayer, etc.

Lorenzi, Girolamo: *Firenze nel Secolo di Dante*. Milan, 1876.

Del Lungo, Isidoro: *Dino Compagni e la sua Cronica*. 3 vols., Florence, 1879.

Scheffer-Boichorst, Paul: *Florentiner Studien*. Leipzig, 1874.

§ 6. DANTE'S FRIENDS. — To understand how Dante Alighieri became the man he was, we must, further, inquire who, and of what character, were the friends with whom he was in the habit of consorting, and what influence they exerted upon his development — intellectual, scientific, moral, and religious. Like so many other things with regard to Dante's life, the names and characters of the companions and friends of his childhood and boyhood are unknown to us. What authentic information we have with regard to the friendships contracted by him does not go back beyond the eighteenth year of his age. We find that his companions were among the poets, philosophers, and artists of the time.

Dante names as his "first friend," the Ghibelline, Guido Cavalcanti, a celebrated poet and philosopher of that day. Among his fellow-citizens this man enjoyed the reputation of being an Epicurean, and the common people said that all his philosophical speculations had no other aim than to discover scientific arguments in favor of atheism. Since Guido Cavalcanti was several years older than Dante, we must assume that the friendship of the philosopher-poet was not without influence on the theologian-poet. The second place among Dante's friends is occupied by the Ghibelline, Cino da Pistoia,<sup>1</sup> a celebrated poet and lawyer of the time, who shared with Dante the lot of an exile from his country and an enthusiasm for Henry VII, but of whose philosophical and religious tendencies we know nothing. Among Dante's other friends we find Lapo, with regard to whom it is not known with perfect certainty whether he was Lapo Gianni or Lapo degli Uberti, the father of Fazio [the poet]; Giotto, the most famous painter of the time; Forese Donati, famous only for his practical Epicureanism; and Casella, the musician, mentioned with so much feeling in the second canto of the *Purgatory*. It is certainly a matter of some significance that

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[<sup>1</sup> Dante himself assigns the second place to a brother of Beatrice's, said to have been named Manetto. In *The New Life* (Chap. XXXIII), he says: "After this ode was written there came to me one who, according to the grades of friendship, was a friend to me immediately after the first; and this man was so closely connected by blood with that glorious lady, that no one was more so."]

Dante was subjected to the influence of the teachings of the worldly-minded Brunetto Latini, of the philosopher Guido Cavalcanti, reputed to have been an atheist, and perhaps of other correlative religionists of the latter, and that all his first friends belonged to the Ghibelline party, notwithstanding that his family traditions assigned him his place among the Guelph party of his fellow-citizens.

Dante's biographers have shown far too little curiosity with regard to his friends and their influence upon his development ; and we have not a single monograph on this subject. From the words of the chronicler, Giovanni Villani, "This Dante, by reason of his knowledge, was somewhat presumptuous, haughty, and scornful, and, like most philosophers, who are never affable, he did not know how to converse with the laity," we seem justified in inferring that the number of Dante's friends was rather restricted, a circumstance which accords with his own teaching, to the effect that the wise man must limit his friendship to a few select persons.<sup>1</sup> Boccaccio likewise says that Dante "took delight in being solitary and away from society, so that his contemplations might not be interrupted" [cf. p. 24]. According to Leonardo Bruni, Dante "was, in his youth, intimate with amorous young men," alluding perhaps to his friendship for Guido Cavalcanti and Lapo. In *The New Life*, which Dante dedicated to this very Cavalcanti, he calls him his first friend [Chap. III]. He seems to set less store by him in *The Comedy* (cf. *Hell*, X, 63 ; *Purg.*, XI, 97 sqq.) ; perhaps, because, when he wrote that work, he looked upon the philosophical and religious tendencies of his deceased friend as pernicious.

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[<sup>1</sup> "The good man ought to grant his presence to few, and his intimacy to fewer." — *Feast*, I, 4.]



cious. In the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* [I, 10, 17, etc.], he speaks of himself with satisfaction as the friend of Cino da Pistoia, a sign that the ties between the two poets must have been close. Of his friendship for Lapo we have no other indication than the sonnet beginning, —

“Guido, I would that Lapo, thou, and I.”<sup>1</sup>—

Since scholars are not agreed as to who is meant by Lapo, it would be vain to investigate the character of this friend of Dante's. Giotto is mentioned with praise in the *Purgatory*, XI, 95. That he was a great friend of Dante's, is affirmed by Vasari,<sup>2</sup> Benvenuto Rambaldi da Imola, and other commentators of Dante. Compare the romantic work of Selvatico, *Visita di Dante a Giotto*, in the volume *Dante e Padova*, Padua, 1865, pp. 101–192. With regard to Casella the artist, immortalized by Dante, we have, unfortunately, no certain information. We do not here inquire with whom Dante contracted friendship during his years of exile, because these casual late friends naturally exercised little or no influence upon him.

§ 7. YOUNG LOVE. — From the years of his infancy, and throughout the whole course of his life, Dante was under the influence of an omnipotent love, pure, holy, and chaste, which did not forsake him even when the ashes of the beloved one had long been cold. The

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[<sup>1</sup> “Guido, vorrei che tu e Lapo ed io.” Translated by Shelley.]

[<sup>2</sup> Vasari is our chief authority for believing that the famous portrait of Dante in the palace of the Podestà, in Florence, is by Giotto. His words are: “He (Giotto) portrayed, among others, as may be seen even to-day in the chapel of the palace of the Podestà, in Florence, Dante Alighieri, his contemporary and very great friend” (*grandissimo amico*). See below, Chap. IV, § 7, *ad fin.*]



Poet was but nine years old when he fell in love with Beatrice, and she was only eight. For her he sighed for sixteen long years, and of her he continued to sing even after her death, which took place on the 9th June, 1290, until at last a vision made him resolve to say no more of that blessed one until he could treat of her worthily; and, with this view, he devoted himself to study, in order to be able to say of her what was never said of woman.<sup>1</sup> This he did in *The Divine Comedy*, by making Beatrice the symbol of that guide destined by Providence to guide the human race, according to revelation, to spiritual blessedness.

On this first meeting with Beatrice there began for Dante the *New Life*; that is, a regeneration. The relations between the two lovers were never intimate, being limited to a few glances and a few affectionate salutations. From the very first, Dante's love was altogether ideal, celestial, and free from any touch of sensuality. In the beauty of his lady on earth he saw the reflection of the heavenly beauties and of the glory of the Creator; and, far from inflaming his senses, the sight of Beatrice directed him and guided him on the path of filial faith in God, of trust in the goodness of the Heavenly Father, and of holy love to his neighbor.

The source of the story of the innocent and holy loves of Dante and Beatrice is *The New Life*, of which we shall speak further on. Boccaccio tells us the following story, more of a

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[<sup>1</sup> *New Life*, Chap. XLIII.]

romance than anything else, which we simply quote without note or comment:—

“At the season when the softness of the sky clothes afresh the earth with its adornments, and makes it all gay with a variety of flowers mingled with green leaves, it was the custom in our city, both for men and women, to hold festivals, in their respective districts and in distinct companies. Whence it came to pass that, among others, Folco Portinari, a man very much respected at that time among his fellow-citizens, had, on the first of May, gathered his neighbors to a festival in his own house. Among these was the above-named Alighieri, who, as little children are wont to follow their fathers, especially on occasions of festivity, was accompanied by Dante, who had not yet completed his ninth year. It happened that, mingling here with other children of the same age, both boys and girls, of whom there was a large number in the house of the feast-giver, after the first tables were served, he began to play, in child fashion, at whatever his tender age could do. There was in the crowd of young people a daughter of the above-mentioned Folco, named Bice (as he always called her, her real name being Beatrice), aged perhaps about eight years, very sweet and beautiful in her girlishness, and very graceful and attractive in her ways, with manners and words far more grave and modest than her few years demanded. In addition to this, her features were extremely delicate, regular, and full, not only of beauty, but of all pure loveliness, so that she was by many looked upon as a little angel. She, then, such as I describe her, and, it may be, far more beautiful, appeared to the eyes of Dante at this feast, not, I think, for the first time, but for the first time with the power to awake love. Dante, though still a child, received her fair image into his heart with such affection that, from that day forth, so long as he lived, it never left him. . . . As he grew older, the flames of love increased, so that nothing else gave

him any pleasure or rest or comfort but to see her. For which reason, letting go everything else, he went most anxiously wherever he could hope to see her, just as if from the sight of her, and from her eyes, he were going to draw all his happiness and his entire consolation."

That Beatrice, Dante's beloved, was the daughter of Messer Folco Portinari and of Madonna Gilia Caponsacchi, and that she was afterwards married to Messer Simone de' Bardi, is the usual and most probable view. Some persons are of the opinion that Dante's Beatrice was nothing more than an abstraction, a mere allegory. But it is difficult to understand how Dante could have said of an abstraction that it was a year younger than himself (*New Life*, Chap. I) ; that it was born, lived, and died in the Via del Corso (Race Street), which traverses the city of Florence from one end to the other (*ibid.* Chap. XLI) ; that, when her father died, she was utterly bowed down with grief (*ibid.* Chap. XXII) ; that she herself died on the first hour of the 9th June, 1290 (*ibid.* Chap. XXX) ; that she underwent a change of life, rising from flesh to spirit, when she was on the very threshold of the second period of her life (*Purg.*, XXX, 124 sqq.) ; that the fair limbs in which she was enfolded are dissolved and reduced to mould (*Purg.*, XXXI, 49 sqq.), etc., etc. Nobody in the world speaks in this way about any but a real person.

Respecting the purity and chastity of Dante's love for Beatrice, there never has been any question, in spite of the fact that, to us moderns, it seems strange that the poet should have been deeply in love with another man's wife. Attempts have been made to justify this by the examples of poets and the practices of chivalry. Furthermore, the question arises, whether Dante's love was returned. From his own statement, that he could not speak of the death of Beatrice without being a praiser of himself<sup>1</sup> (*New Life*, Chap. XXIX), and from cer-

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[<sup>1</sup> On self-praise, see *Feast*, I, 2.]



tain other hints in *The New Life* and *The Comedy*, we seem justified in answering in the affirmative. But why, then, did Dante not ask her in marriage? It is said that he did so, but in vain. It seems more probable that Beatrice was married at a time when Dante could have yet no thought of settling down to family life, it being the custom in Florence for young ladies to marry early. In writing the fifteenth canto of the *Paradise*, in which he blames this custom, he was perhaps thinking sadly of his own case (*Parad.*, XV, 103 sqq.). We may, further, observe that, according to Dante's own testimony, between the day when he first saw Beatrice and the day when he saw her for the second time, there elapsed nine years<sup>1</sup> (*New Life*, Chap. II); a very singular fact, since the houses of the Alighieri and the Portinari were near together. Either Dante was absent from Florence during these nine years, having been sent to school in some other city, or else the two young people were always purposely kept apart.<sup>2</sup> It is not improbable that Beatrice was already married to Simone de' Bardi when Dante, in his eighteenth year, saw her for the second time; and this view receives confirmation from the fact that, in *The New Life*, there does not occur the least reference to her marriage, although in Chapter XIV she appears among married women.

With regard to the effects of his love for Beatrice, we have

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[<sup>1</sup> The author is here unaccountably mistaken. Dante says, on the contrary: "Love commanded me many times to endeavor to see this very youthful angel; wherefore, in my boyhood, I often went in search of her; and *I saw her* to be of such noble and laudable carriage," etc. It seems to have been nine years before Dante *was spoken to* by her the second time, and this is strange enough. He says: "That was the first time that her words set out to come to my ears." — *New Life*, Chap. III.]

[<sup>2</sup> The former of these alternatives seems quite inadmissible; for Dante says distinctly in *The Feast* (I, 3) that he was "born and nurtured in Florence up to the culmination of his life"; that is, to the age of thirty-five.]



Dante's own precise and unequivocal testimony. The image of Beatrice, which he wore imprinted on his heart, was of such noble virtue that it never once suffered Love to govern him without the faithful counsel of Reason (*New Life*, Chap. I). His love makes his heart noble and gay (*ibid.* Chap. VII, Son. II) ; it inflames him with holy charity, impelling him to love his neighbor, and forgive those who offend him (*ibid.* Chapp. X, XI, XIX ; Canz. I, 3, 21 ; Son. XI) ; it withdraws his understanding from all things vile (*ibid.* Chap. XIII) ; guides him in the straight path (*Purg.*, XXX, 121 sqq.) ; elevates him to the love of the highest good, which is God (*Purg.*, XXXI, 22 sqq.), and to the contemplation of the Kingdom of the Blest (*Feast*, II, 8). From these testimonies, and from many others, it follows, with the utmost clearness, that the life of Dante, in that period of over sixteen years, from the first day when the glorious lady of his mind<sup>1</sup> appeared to his eyes to the day of her death, was a life of innocent faith, hope, and charity.

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Renier, Rodolfo : *L' Amore di Dante*. In his work, *La Vita Nuova e la Fiammetta*. A Critical Study. Turin and Rome, 1879, pp. 75-216.

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[<sup>1</sup> *New Life*, Chap. I.]

§ 8. STUDIES AND PUBLIC SERVICES. — Being altogether pure and chaste, Dante's love for Beatrice, far from distracting him or being an impediment to the exercise of his mind and to worthy enterprises, was a powerful stimulus, impelling him forward on the path of toil and glory. Assiduous and unwearied in study, and strong in his love for Beatrice, he rose above the vulgar crowd, and in those years laid the foundation of that vast knowledge, which, embracing, as it did, the whole universe, excited the admiration, not only of his contemporaries, but also of all succeeding generations, even down to our own. In these years, also, he performed his duties as a citizen, having, as we find, fought repeatedly in the ranks of the Florentines, as, for example, at the battle of Certomondo or Campaldino, and in the siege of the castle of Caprona.

We learn from Dante (*Feast*, II, 13) that he did not begin to devote himself to the study of philosophy until after the death of Beatrice. And from his mode of expression in the *De Monarchia* (II, 1), we are forced to conclude that, in this first period of his life, he had likewise given no serious study to the science of the State. During this period, therefore, his studies were confined to the seven sciences of the *Trivium* and the *Quadrivium*, i.e. to (Latin) grammar, rhetoric, and dialectics (*Trivium*); arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy (*Quadrivium*).

*The New Life* and the lyric poems show us that, besides these seven sciences, he cultivated also "the art of saying words in rhyme" (Chap. III), that is, the art of poetry. That his love for Beatrice was a powerful stimulus to him in his studies,

he tells us himself (cf. *Hell*, II, 105 ; *Feast*, I, 1). The vastness of his information is proof positive that he did not first begin after the death of Beatrice, that is, at the age of twenty-seven, to devote himself to serious study. Speaking of this period of Dante's life, Leonardo Bruni writes : " He gave himself up, not only to literature, but to the other liberal studies, omitting nothing that is calculated to make a man of worth. In spite of all this, however, he did not shut himself up in ease, or withdraw from the world, but, living and conversing with other young men of his age, he was polite, shrewd, and valiant in all youthful exercises. . . . After this battle (at Campaldino), Dante returned home. He devoted himself to study more than formerly, and, at the same time, neglected no opportunity of making himself acquainted with polite and civil society. It was something wonderful that, though he studied continually, he did not give any one the impression of being a student at all, so gay was his manner and so youthful his conversation."<sup>1</sup>

In regard to the battle of Campaldino (June 11, 1289), in which the Guelphs of Florence defeated the Ghibellines of Arezzo, see Giovanni Villani, *Cronica*, VII, 131 ; S. Ammirato, *Istorie Fiorentine*, Bk. III ; Carlo Troya, *Del Veltro Allegorico di Dante*, pp. 30 sqq., etc. Leonardo Bruni says : " In that memorable and very great battle which was fought at Campaldino, Dante, a youth of good repute, took part, having fought manfully on horseback in the first company. Here he was exposed to the gravest peril, because the first onset was between the equestrian bodies, and in this the cavalry on the side of the people of Arezzo conquered and overcame the company of Florentine cavalry in such a tempest, that the latter, being

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[<sup>1</sup> Here, be it observed, the late biographer Bruni, born 1370, flatly contradicts the contemporary biographer, Giovanni Villani (see above, p. 35), as well as Boccaccio (see p. 24).]



(almost) surrounded and taken captive, were forced to flee back to the companies of foot. This rout was what made the people of Arezzo lose the battle, because their victorious cavalry, having pursued the fugitives for a great distance, got separated from the foot companies, so that, from that time on, they nowhere fought together, but the cavalry by themselves, without the aid of the infantry, and the infantry by themselves, without the aid of the cavalry. On the Florentine side, exactly the contrary took place. The cavalry having been forced back to the infantry, the two formed one body, and easily conquered, first the cavalry, and then the infantry. Dante describes this battle in one of his letters, and tells us that he was present in it, and draws the form of the battle." This letter of Dante's has not come down to us, nor was it seen or mentioned by any one after Bruni. This author mentions also another letter of Dante's, which is lost for us, in which the poet said: "Ten years had already passed since the battle of Campaldino, in which the Ghibelline party was almost entirely killed and destroyed, in which I was present, no child in arms, and in which I had much fear, but, in the end, the greatest joy, on account of the various events of the battle."

It follows from the words "no child in arms" (*non rudis belli*), that Dante was already at that time experienced in warlike matters, and we may, therefore, infer that this was not the first contest in which he was present. The same thing follows from the statement of Bruni, that Dante had already acquired the reputation of being a valiant youth before the battle of Campaldino, and this could not have happened unless he had previously been in other warlike actions. Nor did Dante lack opportunities for exercising himself in such actions before the war in the Casentino. Some suppose that he took part in the war waged by the Florentines against the people of Arezzo in 1288 (see Villani's *Cronica*, VII, 120, 124), and make Dante's



words in the twenty-second canto of the *Hell* refer to this.<sup>1</sup> But, as we are without positive data, such suppositions can claim to be nothing more than conjectures more or less happy, more or less probable.

On the siege of the castle of Caprona, which capitulated, after a few days' resistance, in August, 1289, see Villani's *Cronica*, VIII, 137; Ammirato, *Istorie Fiorentine*, Bk. III, an. 1289, etc. By the testimony of Dante himself (*Hell*, XXI, 94 sqq.), we know that he took part in this expedition of the Florentines and Luccans, and was present when the castle capitulated to the besiegers.

§ 9. CONTEMPORARY EVENTS. — Apart from the war-like enterprises in which Dante took part, the great events of this period, in Florence and elsewhere, must not only have attracted his attention, but must also have exerted a greater or less influence upon his thoughts and his ideas (cf. § 5). At Florence, banishments alternated with treaties of peace between the different parties; to the discords between Guelphs and Ghibellines were added discords between the powerful families. The people rose up against the lords, and instituted a new

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[<sup>1</sup> I have erewhile seen horsemen moving camp,  
 Begin the storming and their muster make,  
 And sometimes starting off for their escape;  
 Vaunt-couriers have I seen upon your land,  
 O Aretines, and foragers go forth,  
 Tournaments stricken and the joustings run,  
 Sometimes with trumpets and sometimes with bells,  
 With kettledrums and signals of the castles,  
 And with our own and with outlandish things.

— *Hell*, XXII, 1-9 (Longfellow's Translation).]

form of government. And, in the midst of these convulsions, the dawn of a new era was breaking. The Commune decreed the extension of the city walls, giving the contract to Arnolfo. The same Commune further decreed the abolition of slavery, imitating the example set by Bologna and afterwards by Cunizza [da Romano<sup>1</sup>] in the houses of the Cavalcanti, and proclaiming, in modern speech, the rights of man. Folco Portinari, the father of Dante's beloved Beatrice, erected a hospital for the poor, which the Commune called the "Column of State," devoting a large sum of money to it annually as alms. Toward the end of this period, Charles Martel, crowned a few months afterward King of Hungary, visited Florence, and did not disdain to grant his friendship to the young poet. In the other parts of Italy those acts of treachery and barbarism were going on which Dante has made forever memorable in his verse; and Sicily, in its Vespers, showed what evil fruit is ripened by "that evil lordship which always afflicts the subject peoples" [*Parad.*, VIII, 73 sq.].

As it is no part of our present purpose to relate the history of the time, we refer the reader to the contemporary chroniclers and historians, and only offer here a chronological bird's-eye view of the principal contemporary events, especially of those mentioned by our poet.

1268. Conradin, grandson of Frederic II, fights with Charles of Anjou. Victor at first, he is afterwards vanquished,

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[<sup>1</sup> See *Parad.*, IX, 32 sqq.]

taken captive by treachery, condemned to death and beheaded. Cf. *Hell*, XXVIII, 17 sqq., and *Purg.*, XX, 67 sqq.

1269. Victory of the Florentines, near Colle di Valdelsa, over the Sienese and other Ghibellines, under the command of Provenzan Salvati and Count Guido Novello. Cf. *Purg.*, XI, 12 sqq.; XIII, 115 sqq.

1271.<sup>1</sup> Guy de Montfort murders Prince Henry, nephew of Henry III of England, in a church at Viterbo. Cf. *Hell*, XII, 118 sqq.

1273. Attempts of Pope Gregory X to restore peace in Florence. Four days' peace. The city placed under interdict. The Ghibellines finally readmitted.

1274. Death of Thomas Aquinas, supposed to have been poisoned at the instigation of Charles of Anjou. Cf. *Purg.*, XX, 67-69; *Parad.*, X, 99; XII, 110. [Death of John Fidanza (St. Bonaventura). Cf. *Parad.*, XII, 127 sqq.]

1275. The Ghibellines again expelled from Florence.—Branca d' Oria treacherously kills Michele Zanca, in order to obtain the judicature of Logodoro, in Sardinia. Cf. *Hell*, XXII, 88; XXXIII, 136 sqq.

1276. Execution of Pierre de la Brosse, grand chamberlain of Philip the Bold. Cf. *Purg.*, VI, 19 sqq.

1277. Nicholas III (degli Orsini) succeeds Hadrian V in the papacy. Cf. *Hell*, XIX, 31 sqq.; *Purg.*, XIX, 27 sqq.

1278. Discords at Florence between the Adimari and the Donati, the Tosinghi and the Pazzi.—Peace restored by Cardinal Latino, legate of Nicholas III.—Death of Otto-kar II, king of Bohemia. Cf. *Purg.*, VII, 100 sqq.

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[<sup>1</sup> The author, trusting to Italian chronicles, places this event in 1270, and calls Henry *son* of the English king; but see Pearson's *History of England during the Early and Middle Ages*, Vol. II, p. 279.]



1279. Master Adam of Brescia, counterfeiter of gold florins, burnt alive. Cf. *Hell*, XXX, 61 sqq. — Expelled Ghibellines return to Florence.
1281. Martin IV elected Pope. Cf. *Purg.*, XXIV, 20 sqq. — Death of Sordello (?). Cf. *Purg.*, VI, 74 sqq. — Guido da Montefeltro defeats the French at Forlì. Cf. *Hell*, XXVII, 43 sqq.
1282. The Sicilian Vespers. Cf. *Parad.*, VIII, 73 sqq. — The Florentines abolish the office of the Fourteen, and create, in its place, that of the Priors. Law against the *Grandees*.
1284. The Pisans defeated by the Genoese at Meloria: the greatest naval battle of the Middle Ages. — Philip the Fair ascends the throne. — Death of Peter III of Aragon. Cf. *Purg.*, VII, 103 sqq.
1285. The Commune of Florence decrees a new extension of the city walls.
1287. Abolition of slavery in Florence. — From now till 1289, war against the Ghibellines of Arezzo. Cf. § 8.
1288. Founding of the Hospital.
1289. Death of Count Ugolino. Cf. *Hell*, XXXII, 124–XXXIII, 78. — Charles Martel in Florence. Cf. *Parad.*, VIII, 31–66. — Death of Francesca di Rimini (?). Cf. *Hell*, V, 73 sqq. — Campaldino and Caprona.



## CHAPTER III.

### SECOND PERIOD OF DANTE'S LIFE.



FROM THE DEATH OF BEATRICE TO THE DEATH OF THE EMPEROR  
HENRY OF LUXEMBURG.

1290-1313.

PERIOD OF WANDERING IN THE DARK WOOD, OR OF DOUBT.

§ I. FIRST EFFECTS OF DESPAIRING GRIEF. — Perhaps suddenly, certainly unexpectedly to the Poet, Beatrice was carried off by death in the first hour of the 9th June, 1290, at the age of twenty-four years and two months. At the news of his sad and irreparable loss, Dante was completely unhinged, and gave himself up to boundless, hopeless grief, for a long time bewailing his Beatrice, as a sensitive and tender heart bewails lost innocence. His grief was all the more gloomy and profound that it was not accompanied by any feeling of pious and humble resignation to the decrees of the Most High. Life seemed to him henceforth a waste, howling wilderness; the earth, a desert; the city where he had been born and bred, widowed and bereft of all dignity.<sup>1</sup> So, he determined to abandon the world and to assume the habit of the Minorites of the order of

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[<sup>1</sup> *New Life*, Chap. XXXI.]

St. Francis. This determination he afterwards gave up, and left the order before the termination of his novitiate.

The news of Beatrice's death reached him while he was engaged in writing an ode, in which he meant to tell how he felt himself disposed to Beatrice's influence, and how her power acted upon him (cf. *New Life*, Chapp. XXVIII and XXIX). That the sad news was quite unexpected, is clear from the sudden leap occurring between these two chapters. Moreover, from the third ode of *The New Life* (Chap. XXXII), in which he tells us that the death of Beatrice did not take place like other deaths, from cold or heat, but suddenly, we are probably justified in inferring that her death was not preceded by any sickness calculated to arouse apprehension.

The story of this sad event is dark, an enigma which, as some one has said, is hard to solve. Why cannot Dante speak of Beatrice's death without being a praiser of himself (*New Life*, Chap. XXIX)? How are we to understand the words (*New Life*, Chap. XXXII) :—

“Not quality of frost hath rent her from us,  
Nor yet of heat, as it doth unto others;  
But 'twas alone her great benignity”?<sup>1</sup>

How are we to understand these other words (*ibid.*), that “it robs the soul of every consolation to see in thought [what she was and] *how she was taken* away from us”?<sup>2</sup> It seems to us

[<sup>1</sup> Non la ci tolse qualità di gelo,  
Nè di calor, siccome l' altra face;  
Ma sola fu sua gran benignitade.]

[<sup>2</sup> E d' ogni consolar l' anima spoglia  
Chi vede nel pensiero alcuna volta  
Qual ella fu, e come ella n' è tolta.

Neither of these passages in any degree suggests the meaning which the author would put upon them. The former, as the context shows,

that there is but one possible solution of the enigma. The man who wrote

“Love that excuses no one loved from loving,”<sup>1</sup>

would have been uttering something which his own experience must have told him was false, if he had loved without being loved again.<sup>2</sup> Now, if Beatrice loved the Poet; if against her will she was given to Simone de’ Bardi, whom she did not love; if Dante knew, or even believed, that she had died of grief,<sup>3</sup>—everything becomes perfectly clear, and there is no enigma left. We then understand how and why he could not treat of her death “without being a praiser of himself”; how and why he says that she died, not, like others, from too much

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means merely that Beatrice died because God was so charmed with her goodness that he desired to have her with him, and so called her away,—“because he saw that this noisome life was not worthy of so gentle a thing.” A similar thought occurs in Poe’s *Annabel Lee*:—

“The angels, not half so happy in heaven,  
Went envying her and me.  
Yes! that was the reason (as all men know),  
In this kingdom by the sea,  
That the wind came out of the cloud by night,  
Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee.”

In the second passage, the “how” means simply “how cruelly.” These facts do not render impossible the author’s general conclusion.]

[<sup>1</sup> Amor, che a nullo amato amar perdona. — *Hell*, V, 103.]

[<sup>2</sup> It seems unfair to attribute to the Poet an opinion held by the guilty Francesca di Rimini, who is trying to screen herself under a general and false principle of necessity.]

[<sup>3</sup> This seems bad reasoning. If, as the author believes (see p. 40), Beatrice did not see Dante from her eighth year till after her marriage, it is hardly likely that she loved him before that; and, if she was married before she was seventeen, as we must then suppose, she must have borne her grief at least seven years. There is nothing in all Dante’s writings which justifies us in concluding that she returned his love. It by no means follows that she did not.]



cold or heat, but solely through her great benignity: we understand also the immense grief into which her death plunged him.

Dante (*New Life*, Chap. XXXII) says: "When my eyes had wept for some time, and were so wearied that I could not give vent to my grief, I thought to try to give it vent in a few dolorous words." And elsewhere (*ibid.*, Chap. XXXVI): "Remembering the past time, I was very pensive, and so full of painful thoughts, that they gave me outwardly a look of terrible dismay." And again, reproving the vanity of his eyes, he says (*ibid.*, Chap. XXXVIII): "Ye were wont to draw tears from whoever saw your dolorous condition." And, in another work (*Feast*, II, 13): "When for me the first delight of my soul was lost, I was stricken with such grief that no comfort availed me." Boccaccio says: "At her departure, Dante was so overcome with grief, affliction, and tears, that many of his connections, relatives, and friends thought there could be no other end to this but death alone; and this they thought must soon take place, seeing that he gave ear to no comfort, no consolation, that was offered to him. The days were like the nights, and the nights like the days. No hour of either passed without wails and sighs and plenteous floods of tears. His eyes seemed two most abundant springs of gushing water, so that most persons wondered whence he derived sufficient humor for his weeping." Both in Dante's own account, and in that of his most ancient biographer, we have descriptions of a despairing grief. Nowhere do we find the smallest indication of the Christian feeling of trust in God, or resignation to His decrees. Dante "cannot tell how he entered the dark wood";<sup>1</sup> but we may freely assert that he took the first step in that direction when he gave himself up to a grief without hope and without resignation.

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[<sup>1</sup> *Hell*, I, 10.]



It is true that no one of Dante's ancient biographers records the fact of his having for a time adopted the resolution to withdraw from the world into the solitude of the cloister. But Francesco da Buti, who wrote about 1385, — that is, a little more than half a century after Dante's death, — speaks of it, and in so absolute a way, as of something generally known and unquestioned, that sane criticism has no reason for calling in question the ancient commentator's account. Buti's testimony is corroborated by a hint in Dante himself, in the sixteenth canto of the *Hell* (vv. 106 sqq.), a passage which cannot be understood, unless we admit the truth of that testimony, which finds further confirmation in the loving devotion with which Dante narrates the life of St. Francis (*Parad.*, XI), in his affection for Santa Clara, and in his very outbursts of wrath against the degenerate Franciscans. Of less weight is the testimony of Antonio Tognocchi da Terrinca, who counts Dante among the Tuscan writers of the Order of St. Francis. Now, if the fact is historic, when did it take place? Not while Beatrice lived, since there is not the slightest indication of it in *The New Life*. Not after Dante had married, for at that time he was thinking of family and State, and not of the cloister. It can, therefore, have taken place only in the period between Beatrice's death and Dante's marriage. But, further, since we cannot admit that it took place at the time of the episode of the "gentle lady" mentioned in *The New Life* (see next section), we shall have to say that Dante assumed the habit of St. Francis in the short time that intervened between the death of Beatrice and his falling in love with the gentle lady of consolation.<sup>1</sup>

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[<sup>1</sup> Against this view the same objection might be urged as against the view which makes Dante retire to the cloister during Beatrice's lifetime; viz.: that Dante makes no mention of any such retirement in *The New Life*, although he tells of falling in love with the second lady. But it is

§ 2. THE SECOND LOVE. — About fifteen months after the death of his Beatrice, in September of the year 1291, Dante began to be captivated with love for another gentle lady, fair, young, and wise, whose name and condition are unknown. The first incentive to this love was the compassion which this gentle lady showed in her countenance for his grief. For some time, she took the place of the dead Beatrice, and he began to sing of her as he had sung of the glorious lady of his mind, and many times to put himself in the way, in the hope of seeing that piteous one, who gradually succeeded in effacing from his mind his first, lost love. But, whereas the first love had been tranquil and peaceful, the second was altogether stormy, a continual internal war, because accompanied with remorse, inasmuch as his reason showed him that this second love was vile, an adversary to reason, and a wicked desire. After

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not so certain that Dante does not indicate in *The New Life* his retirement to the cloister. In Chap. XXXV, he speaks of being "in a place where, remembering her, I was drawing an angel upon certain tablets; and while I drew, I turned my eyes and saw, alongside of me, men to whom it behoved me to do honor. They were looking at what I was doing; and, as was told me afterwards, they had been there for some time before I became aware of them. When I saw them, I rose, and, saluting them, said: 'Some one was with me just now, and, therefore, I was thinking.'" Does this not mean that Dante was a novice in a cloister, and that it was there that Beatrice became for him an angel? Are not the tablets referred to the "tables of his memory"? Does he not say, speaking of his drawing, 'I was thinking'? We shall show below (p. 58) that the second lady was no real person, but simply Philosophy. We know that Dante attended philosophic courses for about thirty months (*Feast*, II, 13; cf. p. 61, and Browning's *One Word More*).]

he had for some time undergone an internal conflict, a vision, in which his Beatrice appeared to him as when he first saw her, awoke in him a feeling of the most bitter repentance for his inconstancy, so that, from that day on, all his thoughts turned anew to the most gentle Beatrice, and he began to lament her death with more anguish than he had done before.

The "gentle lady," with whom Dante fell in love after the death of Beatrice, is a real crux to interpreters and biographers, — a crux all the more difficult because all the ancient writers observe an absolute silence with respect to this event in Dante's life, and because the two accounts given by the Poet, in *The New Life* (Chapp. XXXVI–XL) and in *The Love-Feast* (I, 1 ; II, 2, 16, etc.), seem not to harmonize.

Beginning with the chronology, we find Dante relating, in *The New Life* (Chap. XXXV), an adventure which occurred on the day on which was completed the year since Beatrice had been made one of the citizens of life eternal ; and then, he says, *after some time* he saw the piteous lady of consolation, and began to be enamoured of her (Chap. XXXVI). It follows that Dante's second love-affair began some time after the first anniversary of Beatrice's death. In *The Love-Feast* (II, 2), again, he writes : "The star of Venus had twice revolved in that circle of hers, which makes her appear evening-star and morning-star, according to the two different seasons, since the passing of that blessed Beatrice, who lives in heaven with the angels, and on earth with my soul, when that gentle lady, of whom I made mention in the end of *The New Life*, first appeared, accompanied with Love, to my eyes, and took a certain place in my mind." But, if Dante knew that the revolution of Venus in her orbit takes place in 224 days, 16 hours,



49', 7'', he tells us in *The Feast* that his second love began 450 days after that on which Beatrice ceased to live ; that is, in the first days of September, 1291. If, on the other hand, the poet followed Alfargan, who makes the period of Venus little less than that of the sun, he would tell us in *The Feast* that his second love began about twenty-three months after the death of Beatrice ; that is, in May, 1292. In either case, there is no discrepancy between the dates of *The New Life* and those of *The Feast*. There is, however, one strong contradiction between the two accounts, which we shall notice directly.

Even Dante's second love was very innocent, being confined to looks of piteous love on one side, and, on the other, to feelings of nascent sweet affection, at first cultivated, then battled with, and finally conquered. All the more singular must seem the harsh reproaches which the poet makes to himself, and his profound and most bitter repentance. This only proves how fine and delicate were Dante's views regarding sexual love.

On the other hand, the poet's touching repentance and his return to the memory of Beatrice are not only passed over in silence in *The Love-Feast*; they are even excluded. For a little way the account in *The Feast* runs parallel with that in *The New Life*. But then, all of a sudden, the "most vile thought" (*New Life*, Chap. XXXIX) turns into a "most virtuous thought" (*Feast*, II, 2), and the "wicked desire" (*New Life*, Chap. XL) into a "celestial virtue" (*Feast*, *ibid.*). Besides, according to *The New Life*, he battles with the new love and conquers it ; according to *The Feast*, he abandons himself to it entirely, after having battled with it for some time. According to *The New Life*, the second love lasted but some days, whereas, in *The Feast*, these days are years, inasmuch as, when he wrote it (about 1308), he was still enveloped in that love.

But a little reflection will enable us to loose the knot. When Dante wrote *The New Life*, the memory of Beatrice was still

fresh in his mind, and to this he returned with bitter repentance. Hence it must have seemed to him a sad fall to have allowed himself to be unfaithful to her, by beginning to love another lady. Hence that touching repentance, which, considering the little that had passed between him and the "gentle lady," and remembering that, after all, Dante was under no obligation of fidelity to Beatrice, we must regard as over-sentimental and exaggerated. Later on, Dante's judgment became somewhat more sober and rational, so that, far from seeing anything so sinful in his new amorous inclination, he did not hesitate so make the "gentle lady" the symbol of Philosophy (*Feast*, II, 16 *ad fin.*). Now, after having transformed the real, flesh-and-blood lady of *The New Life* into an allegorical personage, viz., Philosophy, it follows naturally that, in *The Love-Feast*, there could be no more talk of "wicked desire," or "bitter repentance," or "some days," or, indeed, of anything not applicable to the abstraction into which the poet had thought fit to transform his second lady. The possibility of contradiction between *The New Life* and *The Love-Feast* is absolutely excluded, especially in all that relates to the events of Dante's life, by his solemn protest, in the first chapter of the latter, that in the second work he does not intend in any degree to derogate from the first.

We conclude, then, that the piteous consoler of *The New Life* is altogether a being of flesh and blood, whereas the gentle lady of *The Love-Feast* is purely allegorical, having nothing in common with the other but the name and function of consoler. Further, we conclude that Dante's second love for the real lady was suppressed by some short internal struggles, whereas his love for the allegorical lady really estranged him from Beatrice, and lasted many years. Lastly, we conclude that, in *The New Life*, when Dante speaks of having repented of infidelity toward Beatrice, he means what we may call a physical infidelity,

whereas in *The Divine Comedy* he tells us of his repentance for an infidelity which we may call intellectual. In other words, the piteous flesh-and-blood lady of *The New Life* is the rival of the flesh-and-blood Beatrice of the same work; the allegorical "gentle lady" of *The Love-Feast* is the rival of the allegorical lady of *The Comedy*.<sup>1</sup>

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[<sup>1</sup> The author, in all this, ingeniously strives to loose a knot which, in reality, does not exist. The reason why all ancient writers observe an absolute silence respecting Dante's second love (p. 55), is because there never was any such thing. If words mean anything, then Dante tells us this in the clearest possible way. He says: "I declare and affirm that the lady of whom I became enamored, after the first love, was the most beautiful and virtuous daughter of the Emperor of the Universe, to whom Pythagoras gave the name of Philosophy." — *Feast*, II, 16 *ad fin.*; cf. II, 13. That his feeling for this lady contained no element of sexual passion, he tells us in these words: "I dread the dis fame of having pursued such a passion as the readers of the above-named odes conceive to have ruled in me; which dis fame, through my present words, will cease entirely; for these words show that not passion, but virtue, was the moving cause. I intend also to show the true meaning of these (odes), which cannot be seen by any one, unless I tell it, because it is hidden under the figure of allegory." — *Feast*, I, 2 *ad fin.* How he came to look upon Philosophy as a piteous lady, after reading Boëthius *On the Consolation of Philosophy*, is clear enough. He himself says: "I, who was seeking to console myself, found not only a remedy for my tears, but words of authors, of sciences, and of books; and, considering these, I judged fairly that Philosophy, the lady of these authors, of these sciences, and of these books, was a supreme thing. And I imagined her made as a gentle lady, and I could not imagine her in any attitude save a piteous one; wherefore, so eagerly did my sense of truth admire her, that I could hardly turn it away from her." — *Feast*, II, 13. How, after having for a time regarded his new love for Philosophy as sinful, and fought against it, he came to accept it as a "celestial virtue," he has informed us at great length, devoting, indeed, the whole of the second treatise of *The Feast* to the subject. The simple fact was, he came to see that Philosophy, or what in those days was practically acknowledged to be the same thing, Aristotelianism, instead of being, as he at first thought, hostile to revelation, was its best support; and so



§ 3. PHILOSOPHIC ENTHUSIASM. — The slight infidelity, which Dante found in his affection for the young and beautiful consoler, was possible, because a moral and religious change had already begun in the Poet's soul. Some time after the death of Beatrice, and before his eyes beheld the piteous consoler, he turned in search of comfort, not to the promises and consolations of religion, and to the books which Christians venerate as sacred and as inexhaustible sources of true consolation, but to the books of the pagan philosophers, which he began to study with fervor, and with a delight which went on increasing from day to day. Thus he withdrew himself from the guidance of the science of Revelation, and gave himself over to human Philosophy, so that love for her expelled and destroyed every other thought, and he venerated her as the daughter of God and the queen of all, as the divine Word, which in the beginning was God, and with God, and by whom everything was made. And this divine Word he found revealed in the works which he studied, and which formed his delight; that is, in the books of the Greek and Arab philoso-

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his first dread of it turned into ardent love. The Church, as every one knows, went through exactly the same experience. It first condemned the philosophy of Aristotle as hostile to revelation, and afterwards, on better acquaintance, recommended it, *with the interpretation of the Schoolmen*, as of the highest value to it. (See Jourdain: *Recherches Critiques sur l'Âge et l'Origine des Traductions latines d'Aristote*, etc., pp. 202 sqq.; Rosmini: *Aristotele Esposto ed Esaminato*, pp. 52 sqq.) It is important to observe that in *The Feast* Beatrice has already become the symbol of Revelation.]

phers, some of whom, like Averroës and Avicenna, were hostile to Christianity. Although Dante never entered the path of unbelieving scepticism, and never was a foe to Christianity, for which he professed reverence during the whole course of his life and in all his works, nevertheless, wishing to investigate, with his human intellect, the causes and foundations of the truths which believing Christians hold to have been directly revealed by God, and finding himself involved in doubts with regard to problems definitely solved by those who believe firmly and sincerely in the absolute truth of revealed doctrines, he found that he had turned his steps into paths which, in the judgment of those who represented revealed Science, were not true, and that he had become an adherent of a school whose path was "as far from the divine path as the heaven that, highest, hastens is from the earth." <sup>1</sup>

Dante tells us (*Feast*, II, 13) : "When the first delight of my soul (Beatrice) was lost for me, I was so overcome with grief that no comfort availed me. Nevertheless, *after some time*, my mind, which was bent upon recovering, made provision (since neither my own consolation nor that of any one else availed) to resort to the method which a certain disconsolate one had adopted in order to console himself. And I set myself to reading that book, not known to many, of Boëthius, in which he, captive and banished, had consoled himself. And hearing, further, that Tully had written another book, in which, treating of friendship, he had referred to words of consolation offered to

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[<sup>1</sup> *Purg.*, XXXIII, 88 sqq.]

Lælius, a most worthy man, on the death of his friend Scipio, I set to reading that ; and, although it was hard for me at first to enter into their meaning, I finally did enter into it, as far as the art of grammar which I had, and a little ability of my own, could do ; through which ability I now saw many things as in a dream, as may be seen in *The New Life*. And, as it often happens that a man goes in search of silver and unawares finds gold, — presented by a hidden cause, not, perhaps, without the divine command, — I, who was seeking to console myself, found not only a remedy for my tears, but words of authors and sciences and books ; considering which, I judged fairly that Philosophy, which was the lady of these authors, of these sciences, and of these books, was a supreme thing. And I imagined her made as a gentle lady, and I could not imagine her in any attitude save a piteous one ; wherefore, so eagerly did my sense of truth admire her, that I could hardly turn it away from her. And, because of this imagining, I began to go where demonstrations were made veraciously, that is, to the schools of the religious and the disputations of the philosophers, so that in a short time — perhaps thirty months — I began to be so much affected by her sweetness that love for her dispelled and destroyed every other thought.”

Let us observe, first of all, that, in the above passage, Dante begins the *allegorical* exposition<sup>1</sup> of the ode which heads the second treatise of *The Feast*, while in the second chapter he means to give us what he calls the *literal* exposition. Hence, the chronology of the two passages does not harmonize. Ad-

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[<sup>1</sup> It is to be noted that Dante calls this allegorical exposition the *true one* (“vera,” *Feast*, II, 13 *ad init.* ; “verace,” IV, 1 *ad init.*). In Beatrice’s case, the true meaning was the literal one ; in the other case, it was the allegorical one. In other words, Beatrice was an idealized person ; Matelda (for that was the name of the second lady, *Purg.*, XXVIII, sqq.) was a personified idea, — sense and intellect.]



mitting, however, that, where he says that the consoling lady of *The New Life* had first appeared to him at the end of two evolutions of Venus after Beatrice's death, he had in mind, not so much the real lady as the allegorical one, we must observe that he did not begin to imagine Philosophy in the form of a gentle lady, until after he had gone far in understanding the books which he was reading. It follows that he had already begun his philosophical studies before the episode of the faithful consoler of *The New Life*.

In fact, it would be foolish to suppose that for more than a year Dante did nothing but weep and sigh. The "thirty months" must be reckoned from the moment when he began to read Boëthius' book. By the "schools of the religious," which he says he attended, we may understand the cloister, in which he had taken refuge some time after Beatrice's death.

We have only to read *The Feast* in order to convince ourselves that, at this period of his life, Dante had to struggle with doubts, even with respect to matters of faith. These doubts show too clearly that he had become estranged from divine Revelation. Indeed, to cite but a single example, he could not for a time have doubted, as he did, whether the first matter of the elements was eternal or created by God (*Feast*, IV, 1), if he had regarded the biblical teachings as absolute truth. His confessions in *The Comedy*, moreover, leave no doubt on this point, as we shall show in the proper place.

Philosophy was not the only thing to which Dante devoted himself at this time. Apart from poetry, which he never ceased to love and cultivate, he devoted much attention to the sciences of the State, of history, and of philology. The practical outcome of his historical and political studies was, that he abandoned the political traditions of his family, a fact which is not surprising in a man who had chosen his first friends from among the Ghibelline party. At the same time, although he

embraced Ghibelline principles, he did not undergo any political conversion or reject any ancient convictions. Bred and educated in a Guelph family, he had naturally adopted its principles. But, when he began seriously to study politics and political history, he became convinced that the Guelph notions were false, and the Ghibelline true, and, being "no timid friend of truth" once recognized, he openly passed over from the Guelph party to the Ghibelline, a transition which was only the simple and natural result of his intellectual and scientific development.

Ozanam, A. F.: *Dante et la Philosophie Catholique au XIIIième Siècle*. Paris, 1839; new edit. 1843.

Azzolino, Pompeo: *Introduzione alla Storia della Filosofia Italiana ai Tempi di Dante, per la Intelligenza dei Concetti Filosofici della Divina Commedia*. Bastia, 1839.

Conti, Augusto: *La Filosofia di Dante*, in the volume *Dante e il suo Secolo*, pp. 271-310.

Asson, Michelangelo: *La Filosofia di Dante Alighieri*, in the *Albo Dantesco Veronese*, pp. 351-383.

[Villani, Ferdinando: *La Teorica dell' Intuito, ovvero del Principio di Causalità fondamentale di tutta la Filosofia*. Aquila, 1878.]

On the extreme enthusiasm expressed by Dante for philosophy, see *Feast*, II, 13, 16; III, 11-15, 19; IV, 1, etc. That, later on in life, Dante regarded his unreserved devotion to philosophy as an aberration from the true path, is clear from *The Divine Comedy*, especially from the closing cantos of the *Purgatory*.

§ 4. THE HOME. — Toward the middle of the last decade of the thirteenth century, Dante married the noble maiden, Gemma, the daughter of Manetto, of the powerful family of the Donati, by whom he had several

children, and with whom he lived a civil, honorable and studious life. Since Dante, in his works, has observed an absolute silence with respect to his own family, — not only his wife and children, but even his parents, brothers, and other relatives, — we have no positive information from himself with regard to his home-life or the character of his wife. But this absence of direct information is, in large degree, counterbalanced by clear indications, indirect testimonies, covert, but very affectionate allusions, clearly showing that Dante had found a virtuous wife, worthy of him, and that he attained such domestic happiness as, under the circumstances, was possible.

As regards the date of Dante's marriage, it is best to admit frankly that we know nothing about it, and that we must leave almost the whole field free for it from 1291 to 1296. Modern biographers place Dante's wedding in 1292 or 1293. But their only ground for not placing it later is, that six or seven children had been born to him when, in 1301, he left his country and his wife forever. But we have no authentic information regarding more than three children born of this marriage. Still, even admitting that there were six, we are not thereby compelled to place Dante's marriage earlier than 1294 or 1295. Some considerations even seem to exclude an earlier date. It cannot be supposed that Dante was newly married at the time of the episode of the consoling lady of *The New Life*, or even that he married immediately afterwards; hence, we cannot assign the marriage to the year 1292. The year 1293 is excluded by the story in *The Love-Feast* (see § 3); for it would be absurd to suppose that Dante's wedding was celebrated in



the time there described. It appears, therefore, that we cannot place Dante's marriage earlier than 1294.<sup>1</sup>

Balbo and others after him have supposed that Gemma Donati, subsequently the poet's wife, was the same as the piteous consoler of *The New Life*. This hypothesis is not discountenanced by the story in *The New Life*; for, if marrying was no longer, in Dante's eyes, an infidelity to Beatrice, nothing forbade him to marry the fair consoler, albeit at an earlier period he had condemned his nascent love for her. The hypothesis is farther strengthened by the fact that the houses of the Alighieri and those of the Donati stood back to back, and that the story in *The New Life* compels us to admit that the house occupied by the fair consoler was in close proximity to that inhabited by the poet. At the same time, it is strange to think that Dante should have made his own wife the symbol of Philosophy, a thing altogether contrary to the custom of the time. But, still, it is not impossible that in this, as in so much else, Dante departed from the usage of his age, and raised a literary monument to his own wife. The fact that he conceals the name of the "gentle lady," while he reveals that of Beatrice, tells rather for, than against, the hypothesis. If in *The Feast* there are no indications that the "gentle lady" was Gemma, it is equally true that there are no indications, either in *The New Life* or in *The Comedy*, that Beatrice was the wife of Simone de' Bardi. Nor is the hypothesis discountenanced by the fact that *The New Life* was completed after Dante's marriage, because we should have first to prove that even Chapp. XXXVI-XL of that work were written after that epoch, in which case the story would be no less singular or less psychologically inexplicable, if the fair consoler was some other

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[<sup>1</sup> All this calculation is meaningless, as soon as it is recognized that Dante's second lady was Philosophy, and the same is true of the surmises of the following section.]

lady, and not Gemma. After a calm consideration of the whole question, we conclude that the arguments in favor of the identity of the two ladies are much stronger than those against it; but that, on the whole, the matter is very uncertain and dark.

According to Boccaccio, Dante's marriage was arranged by his relatives. In this case, we must suppose that the poet, in marrying, did not listen to the voice of his own heart, but submitted blindly to be governed by others. This story, however, stands in direct opposition to what we know of Dante from his works, and even to the picture of him given by Boccaccio himself. All that we know of Dante proves to us, if it proves anything, that he was not a man to accept from others a wife whom he himself had not chosen, or to choose a companion who was unworthy of him. The story told by the garrulous Certaldese must, therefore, be unreservedly numbered among the multitude of paradoxical things related by this romantic biographer of Dante.<sup>1</sup>

In regard to Dante's home-life and the character of his wife we have abundance of hints and indications in the poet's own works, without having to go to the contradictory statements of his biographers. In that passage of the *Paradise* (XVII, 55 sqq.)<sup>2</sup> where he speaks so touchingly of that arrow which the bow of exile first discharges, that is, the being compelled to leave everything most dearly loved, it is a matter of course that

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[<sup>1</sup> Witte, in his essay, *La Gemma di Dante* (*Dante-Forschungen*, Vol. II, pp. 48-84), takes quite a different view, being far more just to Boccaccio, and, consequently, taking a less favorable view of both Dante and Gemma. Whichever is right, the well-known cases of Socrates, Marcus Aurelius, Milton, Goethe, and other great men ought to have warned our author against drawing any conclusions from Dante's character with respect to his marriage.]

[<sup>2</sup> Tu lascerai ogni cosa diletta  
 Più caramente; e questo è quello strale  
 Che l' arco dell' esilio pria saetta.]

his thought flies to his home, his wife, and his children.<sup>1</sup> It follows that the poet, even in the last years of his life, not only thought with the most tender affection of his wife, but that the wound inflicted by their forced separation had never been healed. Moreover, it is well known with what eager longing Dante, even to the end of his days, desired to return to Florence, and that the hope of being able to do so never left him. This undeniable fact would of itself suffice to convince us that Dante's affection for his wife and children was great, tender, and enduring, and that reunion with his family was always the chief of his desires.<sup>2</sup> Very striking is also another fact. Dante, who inveighs so bitterly against the "shameless Florentine women," expresses himself in an entirely different manner every time he has to speak of the ladies of the Donati family. In the whole *Divine Comedy* we hardly find as amiable a young girl as Piccarda, whereas we find no married woman who, in the conjugal virtues, equals the wife of Forese Donati. Now, if, among the "shameless Florentine women," the women of the Donati family formed an exception, we cannot but infer that

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[<sup>1</sup> This, of course, is a pure begging of the question. *If* Dante's wife *was* dear to him, he, no doubt, thought of her in that light; if she was not, then he thought of her otherwise. There is good reason for supposing that she occupied no large place in his affections. In the third chapter of the first treatise of *The Feast*, where he speaks at considerable length of his exile and its woes, he makes no mention whatever of either wife or children. Boccaccio, in a passage evidently written with great caution, tells us that, after Dante left Florence, he would never go anywhere where his wife was, nor suffer her to come where he was; and there is no reason to doubt this testimony. Compare Witte's essay, above alluded to (p. 66).]

[<sup>2</sup> It must surely be a very hopeless cause that seeks defence in such illogical arguments as this. Because Dante wished to return to his native city and his possessions, it does not, in the smallest degree, follow that he loved his wife. Our author allows his enthusiasm for Dante to run away with him.]



what led him to make this exception was simply his perfect knowledge of the character of that member of the Donati family who was his wife.<sup>1</sup> Whence, the fierce Ghibelline, who placed in his *Hell* the "dear paternal image" of Brunetto Latini, the magnanimous Farinata, the father of his "first friend," and so many other remarkable men, not only placed none of the Donati family there, but, with the most delicate reticence, refrained from writing even once the name of the haughty Corso Donati, contenting himself with a single allusion

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[<sup>1</sup> It is unfortunate for this piece of special pleading that the passage here referred to, when properly interpreted, leads to a conclusion exactly opposite to that drawn by our author. Longfellow's translation runs thus (Forese Donati, in Purgatory for gluttony, speaks):—

So much more dear and pleasing is to God  
 My little widow, whom so much I loved,  
 As in good works she is the more alone;  
 For the Barbagia of Sardinia  
 By far more modest in its women is  
 Than the Barbagia I have left her in.  
 O brother sweet, what wilt thou have me say?  
 A future time is in my sight already,  
 To which this hour will not be very old,  
 When from the pulpit shall be interdicted  
 To the unblushing womankind of Florence  
 To go about displaying breast and paps.

— *Purg.*, XXIII, 91 sqq.

Without insisting upon the view of several ancient commentators, including "The Best," that the Florentine Barbagia was the Donati family, which included Dante's wife, we can hardly fail to see that, in this passage, where Forese's widow is mentioned as standing alone among shameless women, and a special comfort is offered to the "sweet brother," in the form of a prophecy that this shamelessness will soon be put a stop to, there is an implied stab at Dante's wife. Never was a better opportunity offered for praising her, if she deserved praise. See Witte's essay (pp. 81 sqq.). In this essay throughout, our author's view of Gemma is combated, I think, successfully.]

to him.<sup>1</sup> From all this we may infer that Gemma Donati was worthy not only of the love, but also of the respect, of Dante.<sup>2</sup>

So far as we know, Gemma did not share her husband's exile. In the first years of it this was impossible, on account of the tender age of the children, which the unhappy woman had to bring up and educate without the aid of her husband, and deprived of a large part of her property. Whether, afterwards, in the years of his exile, she saw her husband occasionally and spent some time with him, we cannot tell, having no information on the subject.<sup>3</sup> It is extremely probable that her permanent abode was at Florence; and it is certain that she lived there after the death of her husband, whom she survived for some years.

§ 5. PUBLIC LIFE.—At the time when Dante was entirely occupied with his philosophical studies, and “was attending the Schools of the Religious and the Disputations of the Philosophers,” great changes were

[<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, this single allusion, which is put into the mouth of Forese Donati, places the haughty Corso in Hell, and this our author, in his edition of *The Comedy*, fully admits. In Longfellow's translation it reads:—

“Now go,” he said, “for him most guilty of it  
At a beast's tail behold I dragged along  
Towards the valley where is no repentance.

Faster at every step the beast is going,  
Increasing evermore until it smites him,  
And leaves the body vilely mutilated.

Not long these wheels shall turn,” and he uplifted  
His eyes to heaven, “ere shall be clear to thee  
That which my speech no farther can declare.”

— *Purg.*, XXIV, 82 sqq.]

[<sup>2</sup> It will hardly now be necessary to say that this is an entirely gratuitous conclusion. Indeed, there is not a single word in Dante that in the smallest degree justifies it.]

[<sup>3</sup> See, on the contrary, the express statement of Boccaccio, p. 67, note 1.]

taking place in Florence. Worn out with the pride and arrogance of "the Grandees," the people, headed by the noble, rich, and powerful old *bourgeois*, Giano della Bella, passed those strong and severe laws against the great and powerful, which were called the *Ordinances of Justice*, and made it a rule that none of the nobles, called Grandees, should be eligible for the office of prior, the highest in the Florentine republic. There was also a law that every one who aspired to any office in the republic should enroll himself in some one of the professions. On attaining the prescribed age of thirty years, Dante, who had already borne arms in the battles of his country, and who felt the need of expanding in the direction of practical activity, enrolled himself in the sixth of the seven higher professions, — that of the Physicians and Apothecaries. From that time he was much employed in the republic, and, in the year 1300, was created one of the priors, not by lot, but by election. This priorship was the fertile source and beginning of all his woes and misfortunes, his banishment and all the adversities of his life, notwithstanding that he continued, for more than a year after he laid down the supreme magistracy, to devote himself to the service of the republic.

On the events of the years 1290–1301, compare the chroniclers and historians of the republic of Florence above mentioned. The *Ordinances of Justice* were published by Bonaini in the *Archivio Storico Italiano*, new series, Vol. I (1853), pp. 37–71. Compare also Ildef. S. Luigi, *Delizie*, IX, 305–330; Fineschi, *Memorie Istoriche*, I, 186–250.



On the 5th of July, 1296 (perhaps in 1295 : see Fraticelli, *Vita di Dante*, p. 211), Dante was a member of the Special Council, called also the Aldermanic Council (*Consiglio del Podestà*) ; he must, therefore, have been enrolled among the apothecaries before that time. It is said that in those days the apothecaries were also dealers in manuscript books, and that Dante matriculated in this profession in order to have greater leisure and opportunity to pursue his studies and widen the sphere of his knowledge. Cf. Enrico Croce, *Dante Speciale*, in the *Revista Europea*, February, 1876, pp. 496-500.

Following a notion of Balbo's, several modern biographers of Dante tell us that, when Dante enrolled himself in the professions, he passed out of his own order into that of the *bourgeois*. But, in the first place, Dante, the *bourgeois*, had no order of his own to leave, in order to enter one which was his own already. In the second place, an enrolment in the professions was not a sign of any transition from the order of the *grandeos* to that of the *bourgeois*. Cf. Todeschini, *Scritti su Dante*, I, 370 sqq.

Of Dante's public life Leonardo Bruni tells us only the little we have just repeated. A great deal more is told by Boccaccio, whose account we quote with all necessary reserve, since it is apparently a rhetorical exercise rather than a piece of history : "Family care led Dante into public life, in which he was so much enveloped by the vain honors attached to public offices that, without looking either before or behind, he threw himself, without bit or bridle, almost completely into them ; and so great was his success that no legation was heard or answered, no law passed or abrogated, no peace concluded or public war undertaken,—in a word, no measure of any importance adopted, until he had first expressed his opinion with regard to it. In him the public confidence, in him every hope, in him, in one word, all things divine and human seemed to centre. . . . In order to

restore to unity the divided body of his state, Dante applied every faculty, every art, every endeavor, pointing out to the wiser portion of his fellow-citizens how, through discord, great things in a short time come to naught; whereas, through concord, small ones increase without limit. But, when he saw that all his efforts were in vain, and that the minds of his hearers were obstinate, fearing the judgment of God, he first resolved to turn his back upon every public office, and retire into private life. Afterwards, led on by the sweetness of glory and vain popular favor, as well as by the persuasions of his elders; and thinking, further, that, if occasion demanded, he might be of much more service to his city, if he were great in public affairs than if he were a private man and altogether removed from them, . . . the mature man . . . had neither the sense nor the power to defend himself against that sweetness. Dante, therefore, resolved to pursue the transient honors and vain pomp of public offices, and, seeing that, by himself, he could not form a third party,<sup>1</sup> which, by its perfect justice, might overthrow the injustice of the other two and restore them to unity, he ranged himself on the side of that party which, in his judgment, exhibited most reason and justice, continually doing what he knew to be most serviceable to his country and his fellow-citizens."

That Dante was a member of the Aldermanic Council, and several times also of the Consiglio delle Capitadini, is proved by the records. But to conclude from this that he was, in his profession, not a simple adscript, but also one of the officers, that is, one of the heads, is nothing more than a possibly correct conjecture.

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[<sup>1</sup> That he tried, later in life, is evident from Cacciaguida's remark in *Parad.*, XVII, 68 sq.:—

"It shall be fame for thee  
That thou didst form a party by thyself."]

According to Manetti, Dante was frequently sent as ambassador to illustrious princes and to the Court of Rome. Filelfo enumerates fourteen embassies undertaken by Dante, omitting from his list the only one about which there can be no doubt, because it rests on documentary evidence ; that is, the embassy to the Commune of San Gemignano, which Dante undertook in May, 1299, in order to draw up an agreement about some details with reference to the Guelph league. A very simple calculation is sufficient to show that the embassies enumerated by Filelfo are to be counted fables. Dante's public life in the service of the Florentine republic includes, at most, seven years—from 1295 to 1301. In these seven years we find him almost always in Florence : it is certain that he was there in 1296, 1300, and 1301. Whence it is impossible that Dante in these years should have gone as ambassador to Siena, Perugia, Venice, Ferrara, Genoa, San Gemignano, twice to Naples, four times to Rome, twice to the King of Hungary, and, finally, to the King of France. Moreover, we cannot, on any condition, admit that Dante was sent as ambassador to popes, kings, and great republics, before his election as prior had invested him with some prestige.

Dante's priorship lasted but two months, from 15th June to 15th August, 1300. His colleagues were Noffo di Guido Buonafedi, Neri di Messer Jacopo del Giudice Alberti, Nello d' Arrighetto Doni, Bindo di Donato Bilenchi, Ricco Falconetti. The Gonfaloniere of Justice was Fazio da Micciolle ; the Notary of the Signory, Ser Aldobrandino d' Uguccone da Campi. On the unfortunate events at Florence during Dante's priorship, see Giovanni Villani, *Cronica*, VIII, 38 sqq.

Biographers exaggerate not a little the honor which Dante's fellow-citizens paid him by creating him one of the priors. Very correct are the remarks of Todeschini [*Scritti su Dante*], I, 381, sqq. : "The Signory of Florence was composed of



seven officials, — six priors of professions and one gonfaloniere of justice, whose authority lasted but two months. There were, therefore, forty-two of them every year, and, since each of them was compelled by law to refrain for two years from seeking re-election, there must have been in the Commune at least ninety-one citizens who had been elected prior or gonfaloniere. As a matter of fact, the number must have been very much greater, because, instead of the previous signors' returning to office at the end of two years, such return to the supreme magistracy was both slow and unfrequent. For this reason there was a very large number of persons who held these offices ; whence, election to them could not be regarded as any great or signal honor, but rather as a proof, necessary for a good bourgeois of good standing, to show that he enjoyed, in some degree, the respect of his fellow-citizens."

Leonardo Bruni quotes, from a now lost letter of the Poet's, these words : "All my woes and misfortunes had their cause and beginning in the unlucky elections (*Comizi*) of my priorship, of which priorship though I was not, on the score of prudence, worthy, nevertheless, on the score of faith and age, I was not unworthy of it." There is no reason to question the truth of these words, even if they were not corroborated by the *Condemnations* of the 27th January and the 10th March, 1302. Was Dante himself in some measure to blame, if so many woes and misfortunes sprang from his priorship? His biographers say, No. But, in the words quoted, he himself admits having lacked prudence. Indeed, at the very time when Dante was one of the priors, the Pope sent Cardinal Matteo of Acquasparta, as his legate, to Florence, to pacify the city, and it was just Dante and his colleagues who opposed him, "for fear of ruining the State" ; whereupon the cardinal departed in anger, leaving the city of Florence excommunicated and interdicted. (Cf. G. Villani, *Cronica*, VIII, 40 ; Paul. Pieri, edit.

Adami, p. 67.) If Dante and his colleagues had not adopted the worse counsel, and refused to obey, humanly speaking, Charles of Valois would not have come to Florence in the following year, and all the sad effects of that coming would have been avoided. The remark, therefore, made in the *Condemnations* of the 27th January, 1302, that Dante and his associates had reaped what they had sown, was not altogether false.

The resistance offered to the Cardinal of Acquasparta is the only important event which we know positively to have taken place during Dante's priorship. And his fault, or imprudence, would have been very great, if he had exerted, in the chief magistracy and, in general, in the government of Florence, the great influence which his biographers ascribe to him. But the truth is, we have every ground for believing that that great influence is a mere gift, presented by them to their hero. It is sufficient to observe that his contemporary, Giovanni Villani, who began to write his *Chronicle* in the very year of Dante's priorship, found no chance to mention Dante's name among those of the many persons of whom he speaks, as having, in those years, exercised some influence on the course of affairs at Florence.

We may, further, observe that Dante was created prior at the very time when the leaders of the Guelph party "were afraid lest the Ghibelline party should gain the ascendant in Florence, as it promised to do, on account of its good behavior, and many Ghibellines, reputed good men, had begun to be put in office." (Villani, *Cronica*, VIII, 11.)

Dante's biographers tell us that it was during his priorship that the heads of the Black Party were sent to the frontier at Castello della Pieve, and those of the White Party at Serrezzano. Hence they praise Dante for his rigorous impartiality, in not having spared his "first friend," Guido Cavalcanti. But, from the order in which Villani relates the events, it is clear

that the banishment in question took place when Dante was no longer in office.<sup>1</sup>

In 1301, Dante debated twice in the Aldermanic Council, and once in the Council of the Hundred. (Compare Fraticelli, *Vita di Dante*, pp. 136 sqq.) In April of that year there was presented to the Committee on Streets, Squares, and Bridges a petition, setting forth that the Via di San Procolo, now Via dei Pandolfini, and part of the Via dell' Agnolo, which was broad and straight as far as the Borgo della Piagentina, was, from this borgo to the torrent Africo, narrow, tortuous, and in bad condition, and praying that it might be widened, straightened, and mended. The Committee ordered the work to be done, and appointed Dante Alighieri as its superintendent, to be assisted by Guglielmo della Piagenta, as notary and registrar. Cf. *Archivio Storico Italiano*, Ser. III, vol. IX, p. 53.

§ 6. BANISHMENT. — Incensed because the White Party would not obey the Cardinal of Acquasparta, his legate, Pope Boniface VIII sent for Charles of Valois, brother of the King of France, giving him the title of "Pacifier of Tuscany," to bring the city of Florence to its senses by force. The White Party having been overthrown by the aid of Charles, who entered Florence on the 1st November, 1301, and the

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[<sup>1</sup> Macchiavelli takes the other view. In his *History of Florence*, Bk. II, Chap. IV, he says: "Both parties being in arms, the Signory, *one of whom at that time was the poet Dante*, took courage, and, *from his advice and prudence*, caused the people to rise for the preservation of order, and being joined by many from the country, they compelled the leaders of both parties to lay aside their arms, and banished Corso, with many of the Neri. And, as an evidence of the impartiality of their motives, they also banished many of the Bianchi." — *Bohn's Translation*.]



Black Party having thus become masters of the city, a large number of citizens belonging to the White Party were banished, their houses destroyed, and their goods confiscated. Among the number of these unfortunate persons was Dante Alighieri, who, being charged with various crimes, was condemned, on the 27th January, 1302, by the new provost, Cante de' Gabrielli d' Agobbio, to a fine of five thousand small florins, and, if the sum were not paid within three days, his goods were to be confiscated, destroyed, and disbanded, and, so destroyed and disbanded, were to remain in the Commune. And, even though he should pay the fine within three days, he was still condemned to remain outside the province of Tuscany for two years, and, whether he paid or not, to be disqualified, as a forger and bribe-taker, from holding any office or benefice in the gift of the Commune of Florence, in the city, country, district, or elsewhere. This sentence, pronounced upon the contumacious Dante, was followed, forty days after, on the 10th March, 1302, by another, in which, basing his action upon the fact that the Poet had, in the first place, not obeyed his summons, in the second, that he had not paid his fine (facts which were assumed to mean that he admitted the crimes laid to his charge), Cante de' Gabrielli condemned him to be burned alive, if ever he should come within the jurisdiction of the Commune of Florence. Nor was this the last condemnation pronounced upon Dante. His name figures among the rebels and outlaws from his country, in Messer Baldo d' Aguglione's

Reform of the 2d September, 1311, and, along with those of his sons, in the condemnation and banishment of the 6th November, 1315. And even twenty years after his death, Dante Alighieri was spoken of, in the official language of Florence, as an exile and a rebel, banished and condemned by the Commune, as a foe to the Guelph Party, and a bribe-taker in the priorship.

The coming of Charles of Valois to Florence, and the events which followed, are related by the contemporary chronicler, Giovanni Villani. The confusion which we find in all the modern biographers of Dante, in the exposition of these events, is due to an attempt on their part to reconcile the dates of a forger with those of a chronicler. But, now that the imposture of the forger is universally recognized, the difficulties created by him have disappeared, and the account of Villani's *Cronica* has been followed (VIII, 49).

On the other hand, Dante's personal experiences in those sad days are, in great measure, involved in darkness. Any one reading his ancient biographers, without having any other knowledge to control them with, would suppose that it was just during those days that Dante was invested with the dignity of prior. This is perhaps due to their having misinterpreted the following words of Villani (*Cronica*, IX, 136): "His [Dante's] banishment from Florence was due to the fact that, when Messer Charles of Valois, of the House of France, came to Florence in 1301, and expelled the White Party, said Dante was one of the chief governors of our city, and belonged to that party, although he was a Guelph; and, therefore, without any other fault, he was expelled and banished from Florence along with said White Party."<sup>1</sup> Dante, as we have seen, was one of the priors from the

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[<sup>1</sup> It is hard to see what Villani's phrase, "one of the chief governors"

15th June to the 15th August, 1300, and Charles of Valois entered Florence on the 1st November, 1301.

Was Dante in Florence, or was he absent, when the catastrophe took place? In regard to this question no doubt existed till our own day. Recently, however, it has become a subject of controversy, and, indeed, is very far from being definitely settled. If we had only the words of Villani just quoted, we should have to infer that Dante was in Florence; but let us hear what others say.

Boccaccio tells us: "The hatreds and hostilities aroused, though without any just cause, went on increasing from day to day, so that, to the extreme confusion of the citizens, the parties came several times to open conflict, with the view of putting an end to their strifes, with fire and sword; so blinded by wrath were they that they did not see that they were thereby going to wretchedness and ruin. But, after each of the two parties had several times made trial of its strength, with mutual injury to both, and when the time had come that the hidden designs of threatening Fortune had to become manifest, Fame, the impartial reporter of the true and the false, having announced that the adversaries of the party to which Dante leaned were sustained by wonderful and astute counsels, as well as by a very large number of armed men, so terrified the chief of Dante's colleagues as to drive every counsel, every caution, and every reason out of them, leaving nothing but the desire to seek their safety in flight. Along with these, then, Dante, cast down in one moment from the highest position in the government of his city, saw himself, not only prostrate on the ground, but expelled from that city. Not many days after this expulsion, — the populace having already rushed to the houses of the exiles, and having furiously emptied and plundered them, —

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(*de' maggiori governatori*), means, if not that Dante occupied a prominent place in the city government.]



when the victorious party had reformed the city to suit themselves, all the chiefs of their adversaries and, with them, Dante, not as one of the inferior, but as one of the principal, men, were condemned, as guilty of high treason to the republic, to perpetual exile, and their estates either sold at auction or alienated to the victors."

Further on, speaking of the characteristics and defects of Dante, the Certaldese says: "Whilst he and his party were at the head of the government in the republic, inasmuch as a brother or relative (whose name was Charles) of Philip, then King of France, had, through the mediation of Pope Boniface VIII, been called by those who were depressed, to reform the condition of our city, all the chiefs of the party to which he belonged met in council to provide for this event, and in this they provided that an embassy should be sent to the Pope, who was then in Rome, to induce said Pope to oppose the coming of said Charles, or else to make him come with the consent of the party which was ruling. And, when they came to deliberate who should be the chief of such legation, all agreed that it should be Dante. On being requested to undertake it, Dante, rising somewhat above himself, said: 'If I go, who remains, and if I remain, who goes?'—just as if he had been the only one of them all who had any worth, and from whom all the others derived their worth. This saying was understood and treasured up."

Boccaccio, be it observed, does not positively affirm that Dante went as ambassador to Boniface VIII, but merely that a resolution was passed to send him. The same is true of Filippo Villani, who, in the main, simply translates Boccaccio, adding that the proud expression was the principal cause of Dante's ruin. On the other hand, Leonardo Bruni says: "At this time Dante was not in Florence, having been sent shortly before as ambassador to the Pope, to proffer the concord and peace of

the citizens ; nevertheless, on account of the wrath of those members of the Black Party who had been banished during his priorship, a raid was made upon his house, everything was plundered, and all his possessions were wasted ; while he himself, along with Messer Palmieri Altoviti, was banished for contumacy in not appearing [before the mayor], and, in truth, for no wrong done. The way in which the banishment was managed was this : they made an iniquitous and perverse law, whose action was retrospective, so that the mayor of Florence was empowered and obliged to take cognizance of the wrongs previously committed in the office of the priorate, although the priors at the term of their office had been acquitted of all wrong. On the strength of this law, Dante, having been summoned by Messer Cante de' Gabrielli, then mayor of Florence, and being absent and failing to appear, was condemned and banished, and his property confiscated, notwithstanding that it had previously been plundered and wasted."

After Bruni, all Dante's biographers have admitted, as a fact beyond question, that Dante went as ambassador to Boniface VIII ; that he was in Rome when the terrible catastrophe at Florence took place ; and that he received the first news of it at Siena, on his way back from Rome. The first person to call this account in question, as far as we know, was Pietro Fanfani, and he went no further than to express a doubt. A monograph has recently been published at Naples, in which it is distinctly denied that Dante ever went as ambassador to Boniface VIII. Not having seen the Neapolitan critic's work, we do not know upon what arguments he bases his thesis ; but a repeated and careful examination of the sources roused in us likewise a doubt, which gradually became a certainty. It is true that the authority of Leonardo Bruni is of very great weight, and yet, since he is the first person who states positively that, at the time of the catastrophe, Dante was not in Florence, but in

Rome, we may be allowed to question whether he was not mistaken, and whether Boccaccio's anecdote was not his only source for the story of the embassy. In fact,

(1) No contemporary historian gives any hint that in 1301 the White Party at Florence sent ambassadors to Boniface VIII. Giovanni Villani, that most diligent collector of the memoirs of the republic, who, as he himself affirms (*Cronica*, VIII, 49), took part in the unhappy events of 1301 and the following years, knows nothing of the embassy of 1301. If ambassadors were really sent, his silence is inexplicable.

(2) From the account of Boccaccio above quoted, it is clear that, according to him, Dante was in Florence at the time of the catastrophe, and that he fled along with his political partisans. Nor in the later anecdote does Boccaccio affirm that Dante really went to Rome, but only that there was a motion to send him there. Indeed, he repeats in his *Commentary* that Dante was among those who fled from Florence along with Vieri de' Cerchi.<sup>1</sup> It seems clear and evident that, of all this story of the embassy of 1301, Boccaccio knew only the proud word: "If I go, who remains; if I remain, who goes?" which may have been uttered under other circumstances, but which Dante probably never uttered at all. Small, indeed, in matters historic is the authority of Giovanni Boccaccio; but, as no historian gives any hint of the embassy of 1301, his statement that Dante fled from Florence with the chief of his colleagues becomes most probable, especially since he repeats it at an advanced age.

(3) If the White Party sent ambassadors to Boniface VIII, to prevent Charles of Valois from coming to Florence, this must have been in September, 1301. Indeed, the biographers say that Dante left Florence on his embassy to the Pope toward

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[<sup>1</sup> Vol. I, pp. 19 sq.]



the end of September, or in the beginning of October, of that year. But, at that time, Boniface VIII was, with his court, at Anagni. Dante, therefore, must have gone to Anagni, whereas all the biographers make him go to Rome.

(4) In the sentence of condemnation pronounced on the 27th January, 1302, it is said that Dante and his companions in misfortune, Messer Palmieri degli Altoviti, Sippo Becchi, and Orlanduccio Orlandi, were cited and summoned, according to law, by means of the Commune of Florence, to appear within a certain time before the mayor and his court, but that they contumaciously absented themselves (*se contumaciter absentando*). If Dante was in Rome, all Florence must have known it. All Florence, therefore, must have known that the charge of contumacy was false and mendacious. Now, that Cante de' Gabrielli hurled false charges at Dante, is certain; but we must suppose him to have been out of his senses, if we admit that he published in every corner of old Florence a charge which every common woman knew to be mendacious. The tenor of the condemnation of the 27th January, 1302, confirms, on the contrary, the statement of Boccaccio, that Dante fled from Florence when the catastrophe happened.

The condemnations, along with the other documents relating to Dante's banishment, have several times been published; most recently by Isidoro del Lungo, in his *Dell' Esilio di Dante*, pp. 71-208. That Dante was innocent of the crimes laid to his charge, is declared not only by himself, calling himself undeservedly banished, and openly asserting that his innocence was manifest to all, but also by all his biographers unanimously, including the Guelph, Giovanni Villani.

§ 7. LIFE IN EXILE. — Banished from Florence, Dante wandered about through almost the whole of Italy,<sup>1</sup>

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[<sup>1</sup> *Feast*, I, 3.]

learning how strong the bread of others tastes of salt, and how hard a path it is to go up and down on others' stairs,<sup>1</sup> and showing, against his will, the wound of fortune, which is often wont to be unjustly imputed to the wounded.<sup>2</sup> In the first years of his exile, he joined his companions in misfortune, who, with the aid of the Ghibellines of Tuscany, were making vain attempts to re-enter Florence by force. But, being after a time disgusted and offended by his companions of the White Party, the Poet forsook their cause and formed a party by himself.<sup>3</sup> From Bologna he removed to Padua, where he lived in 1306, and was witness to a notary's deed. From Padua he went to Lunigiana,<sup>4</sup> where he was procurator to the Marquis Francesco Malaspina, in concluding peace with Antonio di Canulla, bishop of Luni, on the 6th October, 1306. With the Marquises Malaspina he found that liberal hospitality of which he makes honorable mention in the *Purgatory*.<sup>5</sup> After this, the traces of the illustrious exile are lost in the darkness of the times. It is said that he went into the Casen-

[<sup>1</sup> Tu proverai sì come sa di sale  
Lo pane altrui, e com' è duro calle  
Lo scendere e 'l salir per l' altrui scale.

— *Parad.*, XVII, 58 sqq.]

[<sup>2</sup> *Feast*, I, 3.]

[<sup>3</sup> *Parad.*, XVII, 68 sq.]

[<sup>4</sup> District around the ancient Etruscan town of Luna, near the coast, between Spezia and Carrara, or, more strictly, between Sarzana and Avanza. Dante calls the town Luni. See *Hell*, XX, 47; *Parad.*, XVI, 73.]

[<sup>5</sup> VIII, 109 sqq.]

tino,<sup>1</sup> then to Forlì, and then returned to Lunigiana, whence he set out for Paris.

For want of authentic documents, Dante's life during his exile is, for the most part, an undiscovered country. The attempts that have been made to follow his footsteps are nothing but conjectures, more or less happy. He himself often speaks of his exile in his works; but the information he gives is vague, and the meaning of his expressions is, in part, a matter of controversy. Not wishing to add to the list of conjectures, we

[<sup>1</sup> The upper valley of the Arno, lying S.E. of Florence, between Mt. Pratomagno and the chief range of the Apennines. In this valley lies Alvernia, where St. Francis had his famous vision. Dante describes the Casentino thus:—

The rivulets, that from the verdant hills  
Of Cassentin descend down into Arno,  
Making their channel-courses cool and soft,  
Ever before me stand and not in vain;  
For far more doth their image dry me up  
Than the disease which strips my face of flesh.

— *Hell*, XXX, 64 sqq. (Longfellow's Trans.)

The inhabitants are severely treated:—

On which account have so transformed their nature  
The dwellers in that miserable valley,  
It seems that Circe had them in her pasture.  
Mid ugly swine, of acorns worthier,  
Than other food for human use created  
It (Arno) first directeth its impoverished way.

— *Purg.*, XIV, 40 sqq.

The cause of this outburst of contempt would appear to be, that certain of the Counts of Porciano (*porci* = swine) had proved unfaithful to the Ghibelline cause. See Karl Witte, *Dante und die Grafen Guidi*, in *Dante-Forschungen*, Vol. II, pp. 194–236. There can hardly be any doubt that Dante sojourned for a time in the Casentino.]



shall merely state what we know from the poet himself, from his early biographers, and from existing documents.

In *The Love-Feast* (I, 3), Dante expresses himself thus : "Since it was the pleasure of the citizens of the fairest and most famous daughter of Rome, Florence, to cast me forth from her most sweet bosom (in which I had been born and nurtured up to the culmination of my life, and in which, with her good leave, I desire with all my heart to rest my wearied spirit, and to finish the time allotted to me), through wellnigh all the parts to which this speech extends I have wandered, as a pilgrim, almost as a beggar, showing, against my will, the wound of fortune, which is wont many times to be unjustly imputed to the wounded. Truly, I have been a barque without sails and without rudder, driven to different ports and friths and shores by the dry wind exhaled from bitter poverty. And I have appeared vile to the eyes of many who, perhaps, through some fame, had imagined me in other guise. In the view of these not only did my person become vile, but every work, whether already done, or yet to be done, became of less account."

In *The Comedy* the allusions to his exile are frequent ; but it is only from a few passages that certain dates can be deduced. In the *Hell* (X, 79 sqq.), Farinata degli Uberti says that, in two years and some months after his banishment, the poet will learn by experience how difficult it is to learn the art of re-entering Florence, after being expelled from it. In these words, allusion is made to the attempts of the Whites and the Ghibelines to return to their native city ; but, whether there is reference to any determinate *fact*, and, if so, to what, it is impossible to say. More important are the hints which Dante puts into the mouth of his ancestor Cacciaguida in the *Paradise* (XVIII, 55 sqq.). After having spoken of the woes of exile in general, he goes on to complain of his companions in misfortune, — a company wicked and foolish, that has become to the poet all

ungrateful, mad, and impious,<sup>1</sup>—alluding to the displeasure which they caused him, probably because they refused to give ear to his counsels. Hence, he considers it a glory to have separated from them and to have formed a party by himself. It is a matter of doubt when this took place. Some say that Dante separated from his companions in misfortune as early as 1303; others, that he did so in 1304, or even later. But if, as we can hardly doubt, Dante, in the passage of the *Paradise* just referred to, follows the chronological order, the separation took place before he withdrew to Verona. The difficulty is, that even the date of his first visit to Verona is a matter of dispute, some maintaining that it took place in 1306, others, with greater probability, placing it in 1303. By Dante's own testimony, we know that Verona was his first refuge and his first lodging.<sup>2</sup> The most courteous "great Lombard," the object of such eulogy, was probably Bartolomeo della Scala, who died in 1304, and was succeeded by his second brother, Alboino, so bitterly inveighed against by Dante in *The Love-Feast*.<sup>3</sup> On the death of Alboino, in 1311, the whole power fell into the hands of Can Grande, the friend and host of the poet, strongly eulogized in the passage just quoted from the *Paradise*.

[<sup>1</sup> E quel che più ti graverà le spalle  
Sarà la compagnia malvagia è scempia  
Con la quale tu cadrai in questa valle;  
Chè tutta ingrata, tutta matta ed empia  
Si farà contra te.]

[<sup>2</sup> Lo primo tuo rifugio e 'l primo ostello  
Sarà la cortesia del gran Lombardo.

— *Parad.*, XVII, 70 sqq.]

[<sup>3</sup> If *noble* came from *nosco*, "Asdente, the shoemaker of Parma, would be more noble than any of his fellow-citizens, and Alboino della Scala would be more noble than Guido da Castello di Reggio; both of which things are most false." IV, 16.]

Considering all the hints that occur in Dante's works, we may infer, (1) That, in the period immediately following his banishment, he was joined with the other exiles who, as we know from history, tried to force their way back to Florence with the sword; (2) That, after a time, being disgusted with their manner of procedure, he parted company with them, resolved to form a party by himself; (3) That he found his first refuge with the Scaligers, at Verona, and was by them entertained with much liberality; (4) That, thereafter, he "went wandering through almost all parts of Italy, a pilgrim, almost a beggar," not meeting with the esteem to which he thought himself entitled.

To the whole of Dante's life in exile the chronicler Villani devotes only these few words: "He was expelled and banished from Florence, and went to study at Bologna, and then to Paris, and into several parts of the world."

Boccaccio is here so confused that we can plainly see how little he knew, and how little trouble he took to investigate the facts. He says: "Dante, therefore, having, in this way, gone forth from that city, of which not only he was a citizen, but of which his ancestors had been the restorers, and, having left behind his wife and the rest, ill fitted by tender age for flight (of her he took no thought, because he knew her to be related by blood to some of the chiefs of the opposite party), he went wandering, uncertain, hither and thither, by himself, through Tuscany. Some small portion of his possessions had with difficulty been rescued from the fury of the citizens for his wife, as her dowry, and from the proceeds of this she supported herself and his young children in a very straitened way. For this reason, he, being reduced to poverty, was obliged to procure his own livelihood by industry to which he was unaccustomed. O, how much honest indignation—harder for him to bear than death—had he to suppress! Hope having promised him that



such indignation should be short, and his return very near, he, contrary to his expectation, for several years (having returned from Verona, whither he had gone in his first flight, to Messer Alberto della Scala, by whom he had been kindly received) lived honorably, and, as far as the time and the possibilities of his patrons allowed, very comfortably, sometimes with Count Salvatico in the Casentino, sometimes with Morovello Malaspina in Lunigiana, and sometimes with the Counts della Faggiuola in the mountains near Urbino. Afterwards he went to Bologna, remained there a short time, and then went to Padua, whence he returned again to Verona. But, when he saw the way of return closed against him on all sides, and when his hopes became more vain from day to day, he left not only Tuscany but all Italy, and, crossing the mountains which divide it from the provinces of Gaul, went to Paris, as best he could. There he devoted himself entirely to the study of philosophy and theology, at the same time recalling to mind what of the other sciences might perhaps have gone from him through other impediments." And Dante remained in Paris until the arrival of the news that Henry VII had gone down into Italy. It is worthy of observation that Boccaccio agrees with the Florentine chronicler in saying that Dante, after his banishment, betook himself first to Bologna, and then to Paris.

According to Filippo Villani, the poet betook himself to the Marquis Morovello Malaspina, took up his abode permanently with him, and gave himself up to work on the Sacred Poem. But Villani, in this, merely repeats what Boccaccio had related of certain accidents that happened with respect to *The Comedy*.

Leonardo Bruno, who, as we saw, relates that Dante was in Rome at the time of the catastrophe, gives a somewhat different account. "Being informed of his downfall, he suddenly left Rome, whither he had gone as ambassador, and, journeying in haste, came to Siena. Here, having obtained accurate infor-

mation respecting his calamity, and not seeing any remedy, he resolved to join the other fugitives. Their first junction took place at a convention of the fugitives held at Garzona, at which many things were discussed. Finally, they fixed their headquarters at Arezzo, and there they mustered and chose as their captain-general Count Alexander da Romena, chose also twelve councillors, among whom was Dante, and went from hope to hope until the year 1304. Then a very strong effort was made by all their friends to enter Florence. These friends came, in a very great multitude, not only from Arezzo, but also from Bologna and Pistoia, and, uniting with them, and proceeding suddenly and unexpectedly to Florence, seized one of its gates and conquered a portion of the territory. Finally, they had to depart without any success. When, therefore, this great hope failed, Dante, thinking he ought to lose no more time, left Arezzo and went to Verona, where he was very kindly received by the Lords della Scala. Here he made his residence for some time, and conducted himself altogether humbly, endeavoring, through good works and good behavior, to obtain permission to return to Florence, by a spontaneous recall from those who ruled the land. In this matter he took infinite trouble, and wrote several times, not only to individual citizens, but also to the people. Among his other letters, there is a very long one, beginning, '*Popule mi, quid feci tibi?*' [My people, what have I done to thee?]" If we accept this account, we must admit that Bruni knew nothing either of the visit to Paris or of that to Bologna. But the authority of the chronicler Giovanni Villani is of greater weight.<sup>1</sup>

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[<sup>1</sup> There is really no very important divergence in the three different accounts. The Roman embassy appears to be a myth. Dante, it seems, fled from Florence to Verona, where he remained but a short time. He then attended the Guelph convention at Garzona, and was made one of the Councillors. He then remained near Arezzo, probably with the Counts

We need not trouble ourselves about the later biographers, since they merely repeat and combine the accounts already given.

We learn from a document that Dante was among the contracting parties who, in the abbey-church of St. Godenzo, at the foot of the Alps,<sup>1</sup> signed a deed in which they solemnly bound themselves to Ugolino di Feliccione Ubaldini and his sons, to repair all the losses which they might incur by reason of the war which was being waged from the castle of Montacciano. Unfortunately, the document bears no date, and some refer it to the year 1302, some to 1304, some to 1306, some to 1307, etc. Hence the matter is not without doubt.

That in August, 1306, Dante was living at Padua, we know from a document. See Andrea Gloria, *Ricerche critiche sulla Dimora di Dante in Padova*, in the volume *Dante e Padova* (1865), pp. 1-28. And from the words of the document, "*Et nunc stat Paduæ in contrada Sancti Laurentii*" (And he now lives at Padua, in St. Lawrence Street), the inference is drawn that he had a permanent residence there. It is said also that he there visited the painter Giotto, while the latter was painting the Church of the Arena. The most simple and natural supposition is, that Dante was among the Florentine Whites

Guidi in the upper Casentino, till the defeat of 1304. He then went back to Verona and remained for a time with Alboino della Scala; but, finding him uncongenial, he left Verona and wandered about Tuscany for several years. He then went to Bologna, then to Padua, and lastly to Verona, where he now found a friend in the youthful Can Grande, whose praise he afterwards sang so enthusiastically. Finding no means or hope of returning to Florence, and assisted perhaps by Can Grande, he made a visit to Paris, where he remained till the visit of Henry VII to Italy in 1311.]

[<sup>1</sup> San Godenzo is a lofty castle in the valley of the Dicomano, a branch of the Sieve, below Mt. Falterona, only a few miles from Florence. It belonged to the Counts Guidi.]



expelled from Bologna on the 1st March, 1306, and that from Bologna he went to Padua.<sup>1</sup>

In October, 1306, Dante was in Lunigiana with the Marquises Malaspina, who named him their legal procurator, to conclude a peace with the Bishop of Luni. The document then drawn up is dated the 6th of that month. (See Fraticelli, *Vita di Dante*, pp. 197-204.) On the liberality of the Malaspinas, see *Purg.*, VIII, 124-139, verses which confirm the date of the document.

It is supposed that in 1308 Dante was at Forlì, and some maintain that there he was secretary to Scarpetta degli Ordelaffi. The most ancient testimony to this effect is that of the historian of Forlì, Flavio Biondo, who died in 1463. This writer (*Historia*, Dec. II, p. 338), affirms that, in his time, there could still be read the letters of Pellegrino Calvi, chancellor to Scarpetta, and that in these frequent mention was made of Dante, who indited them.

It is believed that, either toward the end of 1308 or in the early part of 1309, Dante went to Paris, and the fact that no traces of him are discoverable in Italy, from that time till the advent of Henry VII, tells not a little in favor of this supposition, which would become a certainty, if we could put any trust in the famous letter of Fra Ilario del Corvo, and accept the date assigned to it. But, since it is certain that in the year 1308 the *Hell* was not finished (perhaps not even begun), the letter must be considered apocryphal, even if it did not bear the marks of being so in itself.

Boccaccio says: "While in Paris, he took part in a dispute *De Quolibet*, which was held in the theological school. In this, without pause or hesitation, he took up fourteen questions pre-

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[<sup>1</sup> This supposition is certainly not admissible, if it be true that Dante abandoned the Whites after the defeat of 1304.]

sented by different able men upon different subjects, with the arguments, *pro* and *con*, offered by their adversaries, and repeated them in the order in which they had been put; then, following the same order, he solved the questions subtly, and replied to the contrary arguments. This was regarded as a miracle by all who were present." And Giovanni da Serravalle says: "He was a bachelor in the University of Paris, in which he read sentences for a master's degree: he read the Bible, he replied to all the Doctors, as the custom is, and performed all the acts that are required for a Doctor's degree in Sacred Theology. Nothing remained to be done except to make his commencement or assize, and for this he lacked the necessary funds."<sup>1</sup> That he went from Paris to Oxford, seems to be a fable.

As there are many cities and places in Italy which boast of having received and entertained Dante, we have, of course, a large number of monographs, whose purpose is to sustain such claims. We present a small selection of these, omitting entirely the infinite number of studies published in collections and reviews.

Antinori, Giuseppe: *Dell' antico Castello di Colmollaro nel Contado di Perugia dove Dante Alighieri Esule della Patria trovò amichevole Ospizio presso Bosone Novello de' Raffaelli da Gubbio*. Pisa, 1842.

Bianchi, Giuseppe: *Del preteso Soggiorno di Dante in Udine od in Tolmino*. Udine, 1844.

Vernon, G. J., Bar.: *Dantis Alighieri Legatio pro Francis-*

[<sup>1</sup> Our author gives the original barbarous Latin, which I have attempted to translate. It runs thus: "Fuit baccalaureus in Universitate Parisiensi, in qua legit sententias pro forma magisterii; legit Bibbia, respondit omnibus Doctoribus, ut moris est, et fecit omnes actus qui fieri debent per doctorandum in sacra theologia. Nihil restabat fieri, nisi inceptio seu conventus, et ad incipiendum seu faciendum conventus deerat sibi pecunia."]

*chino Malaspina ad ineundam Pacem cum Antonio, Episcopo Lunensi et Constitutio Pacis*, ann. MCCCVI. Pisa, 1847.

Telani, Giuseppe : *Intorno alla Dimora di Dante al Castello di Lizzana*. Rovereto, 1834-35.

Zotti, Raffaele : *Della Visita e Dimora di Dante Alighieri nel Trentino*. Rovereto, 1864.

Ottoni, Gregorio : *Dante e Mantova*. Cenni Storici. Mantua, 1864.

Cavara, Cesare : *Sul probabile Soggiorno di Dante a Persiceto*. Persiceto, 1864.

Celesia, Emanuele : *Dante in Liguria*. Genoa, 1865.

Acquarone, B. *Dante in Siena*. Siena, 1865.

Cavattoni, Cesare : *Dante e il Benaco*. Recordazione. Verona, 1866.

Croce, Enrico : *Itinerario di Dante Alighieri*. Leghorn, 1869-70.

Ferrari, Emilio : *Dante Alighieri in Castelnovo di Magna*. Ricordi Storici. Florence, 1870.

Vigo, Lionardo : *Dante e la Sicilia*. Ricordi. Palermo, 1870.

Barlow, Henry C. : *Dante Alighieri nella Valle Lagarina*. Naples, 1870.

Sforza, Giovanni : *Dante e i Pisani*. Studi Storici. Pisa, 1873.

§ 8. DISAPPOINTED HOPES.—When, in the year 1310, the arrival of the Emperor, Henry VII, of Luxemburg, in Italy, was announced, the news aroused in the heart of Dante Alighieri the loftiest hopes, not only of seeing a way opened to himself of returning with honor to Florence, but also of seeing realized that ideal universal Roman Empire, which he had long been



cherishing. For this reason he left France and hastened to welcome Henry VII, whom he "saw to be most benignant and heard to be most clement, when his hands touched his feet, and his lips paid their debt. Then his spirit exulted within him,"<sup>1</sup> and he saluted Henry as a new Moses, raised up by God to liberate his people. With his heart full of the most enthusiastic hopes, Dante afterwards boldly wrote a letter "to each and all of the kings of Italy, to the senators of his native city, to dukes, marquises, counts and peoples,"<sup>2</sup> announcing confidently that the accepted time of consolation and peace had come at last, magnifying the clemency and the justice of the new emperor, encouraging the oppressed to lift up their hearts, because their salvation was drawing nigh, and exhorting all to yield obedience to the emperor consecrated and blessed by the successor of Peter, and devoutly to allow their Cæsar to sit in the saddle. Going afterwards into the Casentino, he learnt that the Florentines, far from submitting to the imperial authority, were preparing to make the most vigorous and obstinate resistance to his beloved Henry. With soul filled with wrath and bitterness, Dante Alighieri, "Florentine and wrongful exile,"

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[<sup>1</sup> Benignissimum vidi et clementissimum te audivi, quum pedes tuos manus meae tractarunt, et labia mea debitum persolverunt. Tunc exultavit in me spiritus meus, et tacitus dixi mecum: "ecce agnus Dei, ecce qui abstulit peccata mundi." — Letter to Henry VII.]

[<sup>2</sup> Universis et singulis Italiae regibus et senatoribus almae urbis, nec non ducibus, marchionibus, comitibus atque populis.]

sent "from the confines of Tuscany under the springs of the Arno, on the 31st March, 1311," "to those most wicked Florentines in the city," an eloquent epistle, in which he reproached them bitterly with their rebellion against the authority of Cæsar, and prophesied their just chastisement and inevitable ruin. But already the signs of consolation and of peace, which he had thought he could observe, began to change into signs of sorrow and fresh pain. To his vehement epistle the Florentines replied by the Reform of Baldo d' Aguglione, in which, excepting him from the amnesty, they confirmed the previous condemnations that had been hurled against him. Meanwhile, Henry was delaying, not moving his forces against the Florentines. From Milan he was carrying on war against Cremona, Brescia, and other Lombard cities, which had rebelled. Then "from Tuscany, under the springs of the Arno," Dante, on the 18th April,<sup>1</sup> 1311, addressed a letter to the Emperor, in which he exhorted him to let alone the affairs of Lombardy, and to come without delay and subjugate the Florentines, the chief authors and instigators of the rebellion. But Henry, having concluded his enterprise in Lombardy, proceeded to Genoa, Pisa, and Rome, where, on the 29th June, 1312, Cardinal Fieschi placed the imperial crown upon his head. Having returned from Rome, and having besieged Florence in vain for

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[<sup>1</sup> The author, Fraticelli, and Mr. Lowell all say "16th April"; but Dante says, "XIV. Kal. Majas," which, of course, is the 18th April.]

over a month, the Emperor returned to Pisa, and having, in the summer of the following year, set out with the intention of invading the kingdom of Naples, he fell sick at Siena, and died at Buonconvento on the 24th August, 1313, — some said, by poison. With the death of Henry VII, all Dante's fair hopes vanished. Instead of being able to return to Florence, he saw himself forced to go on "eating the bread which savors so strong of salt, and to go up and down others' stairs." This unhappy event marks the beginning of a new period in his life.

With regard to Henry VII and his Italian campaign, see, besides the chroniclers and historians, especially

Bonaini, Franc.: *Acta Henrici VII, Romanorum Imperatoris*. Florence, 1877.

Pöhlmann, Robert: *Der Römerzug Kaiser Heinrichs VII, und die Politik der Curie, des Hauses Anjou und der Welfenliga*. Nürnberg, 1875.

Here the ancient biographers are very brief. The modern ones, on the contrary, are very prolix. Instead of following Dante, they expatiate on Henry VII, his campaign and his fortunes, and give a long analysis of Dante's three letters, which every one may read, and ought to read, for himself in the original. Giovanni Villani says that Dante "sent a noble epistle to the Emperor Henry, when he was at the siege of Brescia, upbraiding him for his delay, and almost prophesying." Boccaccio says: "Dante, learning that Henry VII had started from Germany to subjugate Italy, and that he was blockading Brescia with a very strong force, concluded that, for many reasons, he must be conqueror. He, therefore, began to hope that, by means of Henry's power and justice, he would be able to return



to Florence, although he knew it to be hostile to him. Therefore, having recrossed the Alps, in company with many enemies of the Florentines, and having joined the party of these, he and they exerted themselves, by means of embassies and letters, to draw Henry away from the siege of Brescia, and induce him to undertake that of Florence, as the chief of his enemies, showing him that, if it were overcome, he would find little or no trouble in obtaining free and ready possession and dominion of all Italy. But, although Dante and the rest succeeded in inducing him to do this, his coming had not the result which they expected. The resistance was very great, — very much greater than they had expected. Wherefore, the Emperor, without having accomplished anything noteworthy, left almost in despair, and directed his steps toward Rome. And, although in one place and another he was doing several things, ordering many, and purposing to do many more, all were interrupted by his premature death. This event reduced to despair every one who had based hopes upon him, and especially Dante, who, without making any further endeavors to bring about his return, crossed the Apennines and went into the Romagna, where his last day, the end of all his toils, awaited him."

Filippo Villani, here as elsewhere, merely epitomizes Boccaccio. Leonardo Bruni seems to have been better informed; but he too cuts us off with a few words: "While Dante was cherishing this hope of being able to return, by means of a pardon, the election of Henry of Luxemburg to the imperial throne took place. By this election, and subsequently by his passage into Italy, the whole country was stirred with hopes of the greatest innovations, and Dante, unable to hold to his purpose of awaiting pardon, raised himself up with a haughty spirit, and began to speak ill of those who governed the land, calling them scoundrels and caitiffs, and threatening them with vengeance due, through the power of the Emperor, from which

he said it was evident they had no escape. Nevertheless, he was so far restrained by reverence for his native city that, when the Emperor went against Florence and encamped near the gate, Dante would not, he writes, consent to be there, although he had been one of those who encouraged his coming. When, in the following month, the Emperor died at Buonconvento, all hope for Dante vanished, inasmuch as he had cut off any way of pardon for himself, by speaking and writing against the citizens who were governing the republic; and no force remained to him which could give him any promise. Accordingly, laying aside all hope, he passed the rest of his life in poverty, living in different parts of Lombardy, Tuscany, and the Romagna, under the patronage of different lords, until at last he repaired to Ravenna, where he ended his days."

From expressions in his letter to Henry VII, we know that Dante was one of those who went to meet, and do fealty to, that Emperor. Where he met the Emperor, is unknown. Some say at Lausanne, others at Milan, others elsewhere. If Dante was in France in 1310, it is not improbable that he received the news of Henry's march into Italy only after the latter had arrived there. The dates of Dante's letters contradict the statement made by Boccaccio, that Henry was already engaged in besieging Brescia when the news of his appearance in Italy reached Dante.<sup>1</sup> The most likely view is, that Dante did fealty to the Emperor at Milan, where a multitude of illustrious men assembled at the imperial camp, among them the Malaspinas, Dante's hosts, and Albertino Mussato.

The letter to the princes and peoples of Italy bears no date.

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[<sup>1</sup> This does not seem entirely certain. The siege of Brescia was very long. Though it was not taken till the end of September, 1311, it may have been invested as early as March. Henry was crowned in Milan on the 6th January of that year. Sismondi says: "Henry consumed the greater part of the summer in besieging Brescia."]

It was probably written immediately after Dante had paid his respects to the Emperor, and while the impression of their meeting was still fresh in his mind. From the dates of the other two, it is evident that in 1311 Dante was in the Casentino, perhaps at Porciano, five miles from the springs of the Arno. There is even a tradition that he was for some time a prisoner in the great tower at Porciano. (See Troya, *Il Veltro Allegorico di Dante*, pp. 123 sqq.) From the 18th April, 1311, onwards, the traces of Dante are again lost in darkness.

No one will be inclined to praise the virulent language employed by Dante in his letter to the Florentines. Granted that the Poet not only believed himself to be innocent, but really was so, his language was ill-suited to a man familiar with philosophy.<sup>1</sup> In seeking for a psychological explanation of this fact, we must remember that the Poet was still in the second phase of his spiritual development, and that he had not yet attained that harmony, peace, and serenity which he afterwards found.

There is very little ground for Leonardo Bruni's praise of the Poet for having refused to take part in the siege of Florence, out of reverence for his country. At the time when Henry VII besieged Florence, Dante Alighieri was in his forty-eighth year, at an age when it no longer required *reverence* to prevent him from bearing arms against his country. In the condemnation and banishment pronounced in the autumn of 1315, there occurs once more, among the names of the Ghibellines cursed by their country, that of Dante Alighieri, and this time coupled with the names of his sons. It will hardly be possible to find any explanation for this fact, except on the supposition that Dante's sons had fought against the Florentines (perhaps at Montecatini), which would not be a proof of much reverence.

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[<sup>1</sup> Cf. Dante's later letter, Pt. I, Chap. IV, § 5.]



§ 9. THE SCHOOL OF EXPERIENCE. — Although driven by fickle fortune hither and thither, “like a ship without sails and without rudder,” Dante did not leave off his studies and his philosophical speculations. He even devoted himself to them with such fervor as to injure his eyesight, impelled not only by the desire for fame, but by the wish to serve his kind. But the experience which he gradually acquired was such as to cure him of his over-ideal illusions. For a moment, indeed, he saw himself uplifted; but the next moment popular favor turned into deadly hatred, and all the reward he received was to be expelled and cursed by his country, and to be forced to wander through the world, almost begging his bread crumb by crumb, and appearing vile in the eyes of many, — himself as well as his works. The events, too, which took place in rapid succession, showed him how little his speculations and his studies benefited his contemporaries in practical life. He who “went signifying what Love within him dictated,”<sup>1</sup> every day saw hatred venting itself between both citizens and families. He who proclaimed the sacred rights of the Empire,<sup>2</sup> saw the priest exalting himself above all the powers of this earth, and the peoples resisting, with all their

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[<sup>1</sup> “Io mi son un che, quando  
Amor mi spira, noto, ed a quel modo  
Che detta dentro, vo significando.”

— *Purg.*, XXIV, 52 sqq.]

[<sup>2</sup> I render the word *Monarchia* thus. Of course the title of Dante's work *De Monarchia* means *On the Empire*, not *On Monarchy*. See Bryce, *Holy Roman Empire*, pp. 265 sqq.]

might, that Emperor whose authority, according to him, had been established by God Himself, for the good of the human race. He who wished to see the authority of the Holy Keys venerated and respected, saw "Christ, in the person of his vicar, once more a captive," "once more scorned and put to death between living thieves." And the spiritual authority was falling from the pinnacle of power to the lowest depth of humiliation. The French giant was unyoking from Rome the sacred chariot of the Church, transformed into a monster, and was dragging it through the woods to Avignon, where began the Babylonish captivity of him whose mission on earth was to guide the human race, according to revelation, to spiritual blessedness. Everywhere civil wars, everywhere violence committed by the strong upon the weak, everywhere banishments, robberies, betrayals, and murders! At one time, the peoples, full of religious enthusiasm, were going, by hundreds and thousands, as pilgrims to Rome, in the hope of there securing eternal peace; at another, men, women, and children without number, leaving their professions and occupations, were marching, with the cross at their head, from place to place, shouting for mercy; at another, the doctrines of religion were made subjects of jest and matters for comedies, which often ended in sad tragedies; at another still, men were persecuting, robbing, and killing each other. All the events, discords, disasters, mishaps, and miseries which he saw proclaimed to him that the human intellect with its

speculations was not sufficient to afford effective aid to man, but that he required divine grace and the succor of heaven.

That on his wanderings the Florentine exile devoted himself to study, is shown by the works which he wrote in those years. In *The Love Feast* (III, 9), he says: "By tiring my eyes much in reading, I so weakened the visual spirits that the stars seemed to me all dimmed with a kind of whiteness. But, by long repose in dark and cool places, and by cooling the body of the eye<sup>1</sup> with clear water, I re-collected the scattered virtue, so that I returned to my former condition of good sight."

We must repeat that whoever wishes to know Dante must make himself familiar with the history of his times. Let us add that he must also study the original sources, at least the principal ones. Every student of Dante ought to be perfectly familiar with the works of Villani, Ammirato, etc. In this humble work, we cannot rehearse the history of these times, but must confine ourselves to so much of it as concerns Dante. To help students to understand the relations of the events which we have narrated, we here add a chronological table of the chief contemporary occurrences.

1291. The Christians lose the city of Acre.—The King of France causes all the Italians to be seized and ransomed.  
 "What with the loss of Acre and this seizure by France, the

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[<sup>1</sup> To understand the expressions "visual spirits," "body of the eye," and "scattered virtue," we have only to recall the saying of Dante's "master," Aristotle, that "if the eye were an animate being, vision would be its soul; for this is the ideal essence of the eye" (εἰ γὰρ ἦν ὁ ὀφθαλμὸς ζῶον, ψυχὴ αὐτῶν ἡ αὐτοῦ ἢ ὕψις· αὐτὴ γὰρ οὐσία ὀφθαλμοῦ ἢ κατὰ λόγον. *De Anima*, B. I; 412 b, 18 sqq.). In *The New Life*, Dante has much to say about visual and other spirits.]



merchants of Florence sustained great loss and ruin in their property." Villani, *Cronica*, VII, 147.

1293. The Reform of Giano della Bella. — Great fire at Florence.
1294. Pope Celestine V, through cowardice, makes "the great refusal." *Hell*, IV, 59 sq. ; XXVII, 104 sq. — Giano della Bella expelled from Florence. *Parad.*, XVI, 132. — The new Church of Santa Croce, and the Church of Santa Reparata Maggiore founded at Florence.
1295. The Grandees of Florence throw the city into an uproar, in order to break and crush the power of the new people. — Guelph party expelled from Genoa.
1297. Beginning of the persecution of the Colonnas by Pope Boniface VIII.
1298. Foundation of the Palace of the Priors at Florence. — The Venetians defeated at sea by the Genoese. — Great earthquakes in several cities of Italy.
1299. The new (third) walls of Florence begun.
1300. Jubilee. "Throughout the entire year there were in Rome, besides the Roman population, 200,000 pilgrims, not counting those who were on the way going and returning." Villani, *Cronica*. VIII, 36. — The Cardinal of Acquasparta, the Pope's legate, tries in vain to restore peace at Florence. — Conflict between the Whites and Blacks.
1301. Conspiracy of the Blacks in the Church of the Santa Trinità. Heads of both parties sent to the frontiers. — Charles of Valois in Florence. — Expulsion of the Whites. — The Ghibellines expelled from Gubbio, the Blacks from Pistoia, and the Interminelli from Lucca.
1302. Treason of Carlino dei Pazzi. — Citizens of the White Party beheaded at Florence. — Whites and Ghibellines de-

feated at Puliciano. — More vain attempts at pacification by the Cardinal of Acquasparta. — Disgraceful peace of Charles of Valois. — The Visconti expelled from Milan.

1303. Pope Boniface VIII captured at Anagni. *Purg.*, XX, 85 sqq. [— His death, and succession of Benedict XI].

1304. Battle between the citizens at Florence, on account of an attempt to revise the accounts of the Commune. — Cardinal [Niccolò] da Prato, sent by Benedict XI to pacify Florence, departs in shame and confusion. — Fall of the Carraia Bridge [the oldest in Florence]. — Great fire in Florence. — The Whites and Ghibellines come to the gates of Florence, but depart defeated [*Hell*, X, 79 sqq.]. — Papal see transferred from Rome to Avignon. *Purg.*, XXXII, 148 sqq. [— Birth of Petrarch].

1305. Pistoia besieged and conquered by the Blacks of Florence and the Lucchese. — Whites and Ghibellines expelled from Bologna. — Modena and Reggio rebel against the Marquis da Este. — Fra Dolcino and his sect in Lombardy. *Hell*, XXVIII, 35. [— Death of Benedict XI].

1306. Cardinal Napoleon degli Orsini not received in Florence, and expelled from Bologna. — The Guelphs of Florence take and destroy the Castle of Montaccianico: they again strengthen the people, and appoint the first executor of the Orders of Justice.

1307. Suppression of the Order of Templars. *Purg.*, XX, 91 sqq.

1308. Carlo d'Amelia, Mayor of Florence, flees with the seal of the Commune. — Death of Corso Donati [*Purg.*, XXIV, sqq.]. — The Tarlati expelled from Arezzo. — The Ubaldini make an agreement with the Florentines.

1309. Henry VII of Luxemburg crowned emperor. — The Tarlati return to Arezzo and expel the Guelphs. — Robert

crowned King of Naples. — War of the Florentines against Arezzo.

1310. The ambassadors of Henry VII at Florence. — The Flagellants in Italy. — The Guelph Party expelled from Venice. — Arrival of Henry VII in Italy.

1311. Henry VII in Lombardy. — League of the Guelphs in Tuscany. — Can Grande della Scala acquires Vicenza. *Parad.*, XVII, 82 sqq.

1312. Henry VII crowned at Rome. — Siege of Florence.

1313. Death of Henry VII. The Florentines confer the signory of their city upon King Robert for five years. — War of Ugucione della Faggiuola against the people of Lucca.



## CHAPTER IV.

### THIRD PERIOD OF DANTE'S LIFE.



FROM THE DEATH OF HENRY VII TO THAT OF THE POET.

1313-1321.

#### PERIOD OF ENLIGHTENED FAITH.

§ I. THE RETURN. — The experiences which he had undergone in the world and in his own soul, having finally opened the Poet's eyes, induced him to return to the point from which he had departed, namely, to the memory of the idealized Beatrice, and to that path along which she once "guided him, turned in the right direction," "leading him to love the Supreme Good, beyond which there is nothing whereunto man can aspire."<sup>1</sup> But, just as he had undergone a long and bitter inner struggle, before he finally consented to withdraw from Faith and devote himself to Philosophy,

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[<sup>1</sup> Alcu tempo 'l sostenni col mio volto;  
Mostrando gli occhi giovinetti a lui,  
Meco 'l menava in dritta parte vòlto.

— *Purg.*, XXX, 121 sqq.

Per entro i miei desiri,  
Che ti menavano ad amar lo bene,  
Di là dal qual non è a che s'aspiri,  
Quai fosse attraversate? — *Purg.*, XXXI, 22 sqq.]

so it was only after many internal struggles, and with the aid of divine grace, that, having become aware that the false images of good never well fulfil their promises, he finally carried out the purpose which he had several times conceived, and as often abandoned, of reverting to the way of Faith, turning his back upon the "dark forest" and approaching the "delectable mountain," the beginning and cause of all joy, where man is truly blest.

All this is taken bodily from the Poet's own works. It is himself that tells us that he was unable to make up his mind to withdraw himself from Beatrice, and give himself to the "gentle lady," till after a long struggle. He says: "Inasmuch as love does not spring up, grow great, and become perfect of a sudden, but requires time and nutriment of thought, especially where there are contrary thoughts impeding it; before this new love was perfect, there was required much struggle between the thought which nourished it and that which was contrary to it, which still held the fortress of my mind for that glorious Beatrice" (*Feast*, II, 2).

Dante solemnly protests (*Feast*, II, 16; cf. p. 58, n.) that the lady with whom he fell in love, after his first love, was Philosophy. We may, indeed, doubt whether the piteous consoler of *The New Life* was Philosophy, but not of the truth of a protest so formal and solemn. The piteous consoler has simply become transformed in Dante's mind into an abstract being: she has become the personification of Philosophy.<sup>1</sup>

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[<sup>1</sup> There is not the slightest reason for not accepting Dante's solemn protest in the fullest degree. Dante does not appear to have concealed his loves. See, for example, his letter to Count Malaspina (Pt. II, chap. iii, § 9, note) on his sudden passion for the fair Alpigiana, and his admission with regard to Gentucca in *Purg.*, XXIV, 37 sqq.]

Beatrice reproaches Dante (*Purg.*, XXX, 126) for having withdrawn himself from her, and given himself to another.<sup>1</sup> The lady to whom he gave himself after Beatrice's death, viz., Philosophy, stands here in direct opposition to Beatrice. Now, since Beatrice is the symbol of that authority which guides man, according to Revelation, to spiritual blessedness, the reproach means simply that Dante had withdrawn himself from the guidance of Revelation, in order to throw himself bodily into the arms of philosophical speculation.

When the Poet speaks of the false images of good which he has followed, and which render no promise entire,<sup>2</sup> of the false delight in present things which turned aside his steps,<sup>3</sup> of the many blows that struck him after the death of Beatrice,<sup>4</sup> he refers to the painful experiences which he had undergone in the world and in his own heart, in the macrocosm and in the microcosm, and tells us that it was these experiences that finally induced him to alter his life.<sup>5</sup>

In *The Comedy*, we have the story of Dante's return to Beatrice, not, indeed, to the flesh-and-blood Beatrice, but to the

[<sup>1</sup> Questi si tolse a me e diessi altrui.]

[<sup>2</sup> E volse i passi suoi per via non vera,  
Imagini di ben sequendo false  
Che nulla promission rendono intera.

— *Purg.*, XXX, 130 sqq.]

[<sup>3</sup> Le presenti cose  
Col falso lor piacer volser miei passi,  
Tosto che il vostro viso si nascose.

— *Purg.*, XXXI, 34 sqq.]

[<sup>4</sup> Non ti dovea gravar le penne in giuso  
Ad aspettar più colpi o pargoletta  
O altra vanità con sì breve uso.

— *Purg.*, XXXI, 58 sqq.]

[<sup>5</sup> Di quella vita mi volse costui  
Che mi va innanzi. — *Purg.*, XXIII, 118 sq.]



symbolical and allegorical one; in other words, the story of his return to the guidance of Revelation. In the first canto of the *Hell*, as well as in the second, we have an allegorical description of the long and bitter struggles which the Poet had to undergo when he resolved to change his life. Repeatedly he turned round, meaning to go back, that is, to fall back into his previous life; <sup>1</sup> and the way which he followed at first, in order to ascend the "delectable mountain," was false, until divine grace sent him a guide, who taught him to follow another course.<sup>2</sup> The "delectable mountain" being the symbol of earthly happiness,<sup>3</sup> we learn that Dante, even after having turned his back upon the dark forest, was preparing to seek happiness in this life by a way that was not true; that is, by means of philosophical speculation.

At the sight of the glorified Beatrice, of all things, that becomes most hateful to him which most turned him aside in love.<sup>4</sup> Now, of all things, that which most turned him aside in his love was Philosophy, the love of which dispelled and destroyed every other thought.<sup>5</sup>

[<sup>1</sup> Io fui per ritornar più volte volto. — *Hell*, I, 36.]

[<sup>2</sup> A te convien tenere altro viaggio,  
Rispose, poi che lagrimar mi vide,  
Se vuoi campar d' esto loco selvaggio.  
— *Hell*, I, 91 sqq.]

[<sup>3</sup> Guardami ben: ben son, ben son Beatrice.  
Come degnasti d' accedere al monte?  
Non sapei tu che qui è l' uom felice?  
— *Purg.*, XXX, 73 sqq.]

[<sup>4</sup> Di penter, sì mi punse ivi l' ortica  
Che di tutt' altre cose, qual mi torse  
Più nel suo amor, più mi si fe' nimica.  
— *Purg.*, XXXI, 85 sqq.]

[<sup>5</sup> *Feast*, II, 13; see p. 61.]

§ 2. CONFESSIONS. — Having recognized his error and returned to the right way, Dante Alighieri wished to exhibit, “for the good of the world that evil lives,”<sup>1</sup> not only his ecstatic visions, a magnificent mirror of the age, with its great vices and its great virtues, but also himself, as an example of a fallen man, who, illuminated by the sun of divine light and aided by heavenly grace, rises from his fall, and resumes the true path which he formerly abandoned. Revealing himself without reserve in his sublime songs, he shows what and how many, in his eyes, his faults were.<sup>2</sup> Although conscious of not being absolutely free from any of those sins which deprave human nature, he confesses that his special and

[<sup>1</sup> Però, in pro del mondo che mal vive,  
Al carro tieni or gli occhi; e quel che vedi,  
Ritornato di là, fa che tu scrive.

— *Purg.*, XXXII, 103 sqq.]

[<sup>2</sup> “I say that to speak of one’s self for necessary causes is permitted. And among other necessary causes, two are most manifest. The one is, when, without speaking of himself, a man cannot put down great dis fame or peril, and then it is allowed, for the reason that to choose the less evil of two ways is almost to choose a good way. And this necessity induced Boethius to speak of himself, in order that, under pretext of consolation, he might excuse the perpetual dis fame of exile, by showing it to be unjust. The other is when, by a man’s speaking of himself, very great advantage accrues to others in the way of instruction. This reason moved St. Augustine, in his *Confessions*, to speak of himself, because, through the progress of his life, which was from bad to good, from good to better, and from better to best, he gave example and instruction which could not otherwise have been obtained on such sure testimony.” (*Feast*, I, 2.) Dante had both these reasons for writing his *Divine Comedy*, which he no doubt considered to be at once an *Apologia pro Vita sua* and an edifying *Pilgrim’s Progress* or *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*.]

personal sins were a little envy, arising from the sight of the prosperity of the wicked, and a good deal of pride, springing from a consciousness of the loftiness of his own genius and the vastness and depth of his own knowledge. But the chief sin of which he confesses himself guilty, and of which he affirms that he bitterly repented, is that of having abused the high gifts granted him by Heaven, of having followed a false school, whose doctrines are as far from the divine doctrines as the highest heaven is higher than the earth,<sup>1</sup> of having departed from the way of truth, going down by those paths of unilluminated Philosophy, in which man is transported by the love of appearance,<sup>2</sup> and flattering himself that human reason can see everything human and divine, just as if it had not been necessary that the true light of the world should come down from heaven to lighten the men who walked in darkness.<sup>3</sup> And he

[<sup>1</sup> Perchè conoschi, disse, quella scuola  
C' hai seguitata, e veggi sua dottrina  
Come può seguitar la mia parola;  
E veggi vostra via dalla divina  
Distar cotanto, quanto si discorda  
Da terra 'l ciel che più alto festina.

— *Purg.*, XXXIII, 85 sqq.]

[<sup>2</sup> See citations on p. 109.]

[<sup>3</sup> Matto è chi spera che nostra ragione  
Possa trascorrer l' infinita via  
Che tiene una sustanzia in tre persone.  
State contenti, umana gente, al *quia* :  
Che se potuto aveste veder tutto,  
Mestier non era partorir Maria.

— *Purg.*, III, 34 sqq.]



adds that his fault was not light, but proportioned to the height of his genius,<sup>1</sup> so that he, paying no heed to the inspirations obtained for him, fell so low that his rescue could be effected only by extraordinary means.<sup>2</sup> Thus, going back over the period of his life which began some time after Beatrice's death, and ended with his restoration to the true path, it seemed to him that he had been all that time in a hideous "dark wood," having entered it while asleep and without knowing how, and that then he had been engaged in a struggle, first with passions, which, like so many frightful wild beasts, stood in the way of his return, and then with the pusillanimity of his own heart, which knows, indeed, its own weakness, but does not know the strength of faith in Him who in the weak is strong.

The fact that Dante confesses himself deeply guilty can be denied only by denying the authenticity of *The Divine Comedy*.

[<sup>1</sup> Ma tanto più maligno e più silvestro  
 Si fa il terren col mal seme, e non còlto,  
 Quant' egli ha più di buon vigor terrestre.

— *Purg.*, XXX, 118 sqq.

This is a free and very happy rendering of Aristotle's saying about governments, that "the degeneration of the first and most divine must be worst" (*ἀνάγκη γὰρ τὴν μὲν τῆς πρώτης καὶ θειοτάτης παρέκβασιν εἶναι χειρίστην*). *Polit.*, IV, 2: 1289 a 39 sqq.]

[<sup>2</sup> Nè l' impetrar spirazion mi valse,  
 Con le quali ed in sogno ed altrimenti  
 Lo rivocai: sì poco a lui ne calse.  
 Tanto giù cadde, che tutti argomenti  
 Alle salute sua eran già corti  
 Fuor che mostrargli le perdute genti.

— *Purg.*, XXX, 133 sqq.]

To say that his confessions are merely symbolic, uttered in the name of sinners greater than himself, is as false as to say that the poet, in his confessions, exaggerates his faults. What, then, is the sin of which Dante confesses himself guilty? The reply is: Dante's sin lay in his estranging himself from Beatrice, in withdrawing himself from her and giving himself to another, viz., Philosophy; or, to speak without symbol or allegory, it was wandering from the Faith.

In other words, if we wish to express in modern speech what Dante has expressed in poetic language and in the dress of allegory, there was a time when doubt insinuated itself into his mind, and caused grave disturbances in his consciousness; a time when, in the strife which had arisen in him between science and faith, he took part with the former to such an extent that he became estranged from the Faith, although he never went so far as to reject it, much less to despise it.

When Dante enters Purgatory, the celestial porter writes seven P's on his forehead, — marks of the seven mortal sins.<sup>1</sup> Through this act, the Poet humbly confesses that he did not feel himself absolutely free from any one of the seven sins, as, indeed, every mortal man must do. Afterwards, more particularly, he confesses himself slightly guilty of envy, and very much more so of pride,<sup>2</sup> a confession which confirms what is

[<sup>1</sup> Sette P nella fronte mi descrisse

Col puntón della spada; e, Fa' che lavi,  
Quando sei dentro, queste piaghe, disse.

— *Purg.*, IX, 112 sqq.]

[<sup>2</sup> Gli occhi, diss' io, mi fieno ancor qui tolti,

Ma piccol tempo; che poca è l' offesa  
Fatta, per esser con invidia volti.

Troppa è più la paura, ond' è sospesa  
L' anima mia del tormento di sotto;  
Chè gio lo carico di laggiù mi pesa.

— *Purg.*, XIII, 133 sqq.]

related of him by the chronicler Villani, by Boccaccio, and others, that he was presumptuous on account of his knowledge.<sup>1</sup> As he leaves each circle of Purgatory, one of the seven P's is erased from his forehead, to show that he is now free (though only symbolically) from the sin that is purged away in that circle. When he comes forth from the last circle, all the seven P's are erased, a sign that the Poet is free from the sins which they signified. And yet, directly after, in the Earthly Paradise, he has to listen to the bitterest reproaches, and humbly to confess his fault. It follows, with the utmost clearness, that this sin of his was not one of the sins purged away in the seven lower circles; therefore, neither pride, nor envy, nor wrath, nor unconcern, nor avarice, nor gluttony, nor luxury.<sup>2</sup> What else, then, can his sin be, but wandering from the Faith?

[<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 35.]

[<sup>2</sup> It is perfectly true that the sin for which Beatrice upbraids Dante is none of these seven; but it is equally true that Dante was confessedly guilty of another of these, besides pride and envy, namely, luxury or incontinence. Admirers of Dante like to suppress, or even to deny, this fact. Among these are Witte and our author. Mr. Lowell thinks Boccaccio's statement, that Dante was given to luxury, "nonsense" (p. 62, note), and gets over it in the usual way, by calling Boccaccio's Life "mainly a rhetorical exercise." That neither Boccaccio nor the scholars of his time thought so, is plain from his reference to the work in his *Comento*. It ought to be remembered that Boccaccio was born some seven years before Dante's death, and had ample means of learning about him. Now, Boccaccio says: "Amid so much virtue, so much science, as has been shown above to have existed in this wonderful poet, luxury found very ample room, and that, too, not only in his youthful, but in his mature years. This vice, though it be natural and common, and almost necessary, cannot in truth be worthily excused, let alone commended. But who among mortals shall be the just judge to condemn him? Not I." And this occurs in a work which was meant to be a panegyric (*scrissi in sua laude un trattatello*, *Comento*, Chap. I)! Any doubt we might have with regard to the truth of Boccaccio's statement is removed by Dante's own admissions. When he



From the fifth circle onwards, the two travellers are accompanied by a third, Statius, who is always present in the Earthly Paradise (cf. *Purg.*, XXXII, 29 ; XXXIII, 134), but only as a silent and passive witness, who at the last seems forgotten, since we are not told in what way he ascended to his better home. But the Poet introduces him to show the difference between a purified soul belonging to the other world and himself, who is still a compound of soul and body. The former requires no further penitence. Hence, Dante's penitence is one of those which have to be undergone, not by the dead in the other world,

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learnt the cause of Francesca da Rimini's ruin, he says: "I bowed my face and held it low so long, until the poet said to me, 'What thinkest thou?' When I replied (evidently not at once), I began, 'Alas! how many sweet thoughts, how much desire brought *these* to the dolorous pass!'" He evidently compares himself with 'these' (*costoro*), and blushes to think under how much less temptation he had fallen, and deserved to come to the same pass (*Hell*, V, 110 sqq.). Omitting his admission to Forese Donati, which may refer to gluttony (*Purg.*, XXIII, 115 sqq.), we come to a passage in which, if words mean anything, Dante pleads guilty to the sin of luxury. In the twenty-seventh canto of the *Purgatory*, Dante meets the luxurious, whose sins are "burnt and purged away" by fire issuing from the mountain. Although, in his passage through *Purgatory*, he has never before been obliged to suffer any of the pains there inflicted, yet here he is told that he must enter the flames. He dreads to obey, and enters only when he is told that, unless he do so, he can never behold Beatrice. The burning, he tells us, was so fierce that he would willingly have thrown himself into boiling glass to cool himself. Now, there is but one possible explanation of this fact, viz., that Dante recognized his besetting sin to be luxury, and that he was not quite free from it even at the time when he wrote the last cantos of the *Purgatory*. He does not parade his vice; but, like St. Augustine whom he admired, he humbly and penitently admits it. Statius, it ought to be observed, does not suffer in the flames. Those who cannot appreciate the nobility of Dante's confession may, at least, remember that "there is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance." (See below, Pt. II, Chap. II, § 9.)]

but by the living in this. In fact, he who has erred from the Faith either returns to it again with repentance in this life, as Dante did, or else goes to help to people the sixth circle of Hell, the abode of unbelievers. For those who die without belief, there is in the other world no room for penitence; hence there is no place for them in the Purgatory of Dante.

At the threshold of the Earthly Paradise, Virgil declares that the Poet is now entirely purified.<sup>1</sup> In view of Beatrice's subsequent reproaches and Dante's confessions, it is plain that Virgil was mistaken. There still weighed upon the Poet sins which escaped the eye of Virgil. But Virgil's vision extends only to the boundaries of reason, and stops on the confines of the kingdom of Faith.<sup>2</sup> Therefore Dante's sin, which Virgil neither discovers or knows, can be only a sin against Faith.<sup>3</sup>

Beatrice meets Dante in the Earthly Paradise with the question, "How didst thou deign to approach the mountain?"<sup>4</sup>

[<sup>1</sup> Libero, dritto, sano è tuo arbitrio,  
E fallo fora non fare a suo senno;  
Perch' io te sopra te corono e mitrio.

— *Purg.*, XXVII, 140 sqq.]

[<sup>2</sup> Ed egli a me: Quanto ragion qui vede  
Dir ti poss' io; da indi in là t' aspetta  
Pure a Beatrice; ch' è opra di fede.

— *Purg.*, XVIII, 46 sqq.]

[<sup>3</sup> There can be no doubt that Dante considered this a far greater sin than incontinence, envy, or even pride, which he places at the head of the deadly sins. And, indeed, he would not have been a good Catholic had he thought otherwise. In *Hell*, he places heresy lowest among the sins of incontinence. It is a rule with Dante to consider worst those sins which attack the noblest parts of the soul; therefore, the worst form of incontinence is incontinence of intellect, or heresy. In his *Purgatory*, where the arrangement of sins is borrowed from St. Bonaventura's *Speculum Beatae Virginis* (Lect. IV), pride, which is a sin of the soul, is placed lowest, and incontinence, a sin of the body, involving no reflection, highest.]

[<sup>4</sup> Come degnasti d' accedere al monte? — *Purg.*, XXX, 74.]

In this word *deign* there is a fine irony, which wounds Dante's philosophic and scientific pride, and shows that it was just in this that his sin consisted.

This sin is represented under the symbol of an infidelity of which Dante had been guilty toward Beatrice. But to the daughter of Folco Portinari and the wife of Simone d'Ambradi he owed no faith whatever. No; but here, in the earthly Paradise, it is the allegorical Beatrice, who speaks. Most true; therefore, whether the Beatrice of *The Comedy* be the symbol of Spiritual Authority, or of Revelation, or of Theology, we come always round to the same result, that the estrangement from Beatrice, which forms the substance of Dante's sin, is nothing more or less than an estrangement from Faith.<sup>1</sup>

And, to remove all doubt, Dante tells us that his sin consisted in following a false school (*Purg.*, XXXIII, 85 sqq.).<sup>2</sup> What school he followed after the death of Beatrice, he tells us with all the precision that can be desired. In *The Love-Feast*, he tells us that he attended the schools of the philosophers, and that he dedicated himself entirely to Philosophy.<sup>3</sup>

What we have here briefly outlined we have fully developed and demonstrated, we believe, beyond question in our works cited on pp. 24-5. We cannot refer the reader to works by any other writer, because we are not aware that any one else has ever submitted this matter to special treatment. Some germs of the truth may be found scattered through the Marquis Dionisi's works on Dante.

§ 3. THE NEW MAN. — Having completed his penance and tasted the waters of Lethe and Eunoe Dante felt himself "renewed, as fresh plants restored

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[<sup>1</sup> Plainly, then, if estrangement from Beatrice be estrangement from Faith, Beatrice is the symbol of Faith.]

[<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 112.]

[<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 61.]



with fresh leaves — pure and ready to mount to the stars.”<sup>1</sup> If, in the first period of his life, his tendency was toward simple, childlike faith, which does not doubt, does not examine, and does not ask for proofs; if, in the second, he had tended to be a critic, recognizing no other authority than that of intellect and human reason, by the sole aid of which he believed he could reach and know the truth of earth and heaven, time and eternity; in the third period of his life, he is the man whom the truth hath made free, the man of faith, whose faith, however, is no longer the simple belief of the boy, or of the man who, unversed in study, has neither examined, nor can examine, the grounds of his faith, but an enlightened faith, based not merely upon authority, but upon proofs physical, metaphysical, and historical.<sup>2</sup> He has attained that internal freedom which he has been seeking, — such freedom as in his age was possible. A believing Christian, he recognizes without reserve the authority of Revelation and the duty of absolute sub-

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[<sup>1</sup> Io ritornai dalla santissim' onda  
Rifatto sì', come piante novelle  
Rinovellate di novella fronda,  
Puro e disposto a salire alle stelle.

— *Purg.*, XXXIII, 142 sqq.]

[<sup>2</sup> In this period, Dante returned to the study of theology, which he seems to have pursued in early life, before he was drawn aside by purely heathen philosophy. Boccaccio says that, when Dante was in Paris, “he gave himself to learning natural philosophy and theology, in which he made such progress in a short time that, having on different occasions performed certain scholastic acts, such as haranguing, reading, disputing, he won the highest praise of able men.” — *Comento*, Chap. I.]

mission thereto ; a most faithful son of the Church, he reverences her as the infallible teacher and guide of man in things spiritual. Nay, it is just because he reverences her that he inveighs so fiercely against the abuses which have crept into her, and against the ravening wolves that have profaned her : the zeal of the Lord's house hath eaten him up. And, because he is a believer, free and enlightened, he is not only a humble and obedient son of the Church to which he belongs ; he is at the same time her judge.<sup>1</sup>

Yet Dante does not condemn or reject indiscriminately all human philosophy : nay, he continues to hold it in the highest esteem ; but he rejects and condemns that pride of the human intellect which rises above Revelation, and, drunk with its own importance, flatters itself that it can, by its own unaided efforts, know not only effects, but also causes.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, he praises those who, like Solomon, disdain to occupy themselves with useless or over-subtle questions.<sup>3</sup> But, if he turned

[<sup>1</sup> See especially the twenty-seventh canto of the *Paradise*, in which St. Peter describes the state of the Church.]

[<sup>2</sup> See citation on p. 112, n. 3. Cf. *Parad.*, XXI, 95 sqq.]

[<sup>3</sup> Non ho parlato sì che tu non posse  
 Ben veder ch' ei fu re che chiese senno  
 Acciocchè re sufficiente fosse ;  
 Non per saper lo numero, in che enno  
 Li motor di quassù ; o se *necesse*  
 Con contingente mai *necesse* fenno ;  
 Non *si est dare primum motum esse* ;  
 O se del mezzo cerchio far si puote  
 Triangol sì, ch' un retto non avesse. — *Parad.*, XIII, 94 sqq.]

back from "the way of virtue" in matters of faith, he, on the other hand, remained true to the political opinions to which his studies had led him, and, while he rejected several opinions, physical and metaphysical, which he had formerly held, he completely confirmed his ideal political opinions, even in the last days of his life.

A complete reply to the question, What was Dante's theological and philosophical position in the third period of his life? would be a complete exposition of the theology and philosophy of *The Divine Comedy*. The outcome would be, that Dante remained a philosopher even after his reconciliation with the allegorical Beatrice, and that his faith was a faith enlightened by the light of science.

During his mystic journey, Dante tells us that he is going in search of liberty,<sup>1</sup> and, at the end of it, he thanks Beatrice for having redeemed him from slavery into liberty.<sup>2</sup> On his own showing, therefore, Dante, in the second period of his life, was a slave; in the third, a free man. Indeed, the virulent letter to the Florentines shows that the writer was still the slave of his passions. The same may be said of all the letters written at the time of Henry VII's expedition.<sup>3</sup>

[<sup>1</sup> Libertà va cercando, che è sì cara,  
Come sa chi per lei vita rifiuta.

— *Purg.*, I, 71 sq.]

[<sup>2</sup> Tu m' hai di servo tratto a libertate  
Per tutte quelle vie, per tutt' i modi  
Che di ciò fare avean la potestate.

— *Parad.*, XXXI, 85 sqq.]

[<sup>3</sup> It may be doubted whether Dante ever repented having written these letters. There is hardly anything in them which is not repeated, with added force, in *The Comedy*. See, for example, the opening lines of the XXVith canto of the *Hell*, and *Purg.*, XIV, 49 sqq.]



It is a vain question to ask whether Dante inclined more to the teachings of Catholicism or to those of Protestantism. Not to speak of the anachronism involved, we have only to read *The Comedy*, even superficially, to become convinced that his system stands in direct opposition to the fundamental principles of Protestantism. It is also vain to inquire what direction Dante would have followed, if he had lived at the time of the Reformation. Being what he was, Dante would have responded heartily to any one who sought a reform in the Church ; but he would have condemned the reformers to the sixth circle, and, perhaps, to the ninth gulf (*bolgia*), of his Hell.

§ 4. WANDERINGS. — While this development of spirit and ideas was working itself out in Dante, he continued to wander through different parts of Italy, with apparently no other hope than finally to overcome the cruelty of his fellow-citizens by the productions of his lofty genius. Time having, in great part, wiped out the traces of the illustrious exile, it is not known where he first heard the sad news of the death of him whom he had saluted and proclaimed the Savior of humble Italy, nor where he wandered during the two following years. A tradition, unsupported by any authentic proofs, but perhaps, in the main, correct, tells us that, on the death of Henry, Dante, overwhelmed with sad thoughts, retired for some time into the gloomy solitudes of the Camaldolese monastery of Santa Croce di Fonte Avellana, in the territory of Agubbio, on the side of the mountain named Catria. But, though disap-

pointed in his fairest hopes, though a homeless exile and almost a beggar, that great heart, full of high and noble aspirations, did not cease to beat for the universal good of Church and State. When, in April, 1314, the avaricious and lecherous Pope, Clement V, died, and the news reached Dante, he addressed to the Italian cardinals a letter, written in prophetic style, reproving them bitterly for their past errors, and warmly exhorting them to consult for the good of Christendom, by choosing an Italian pontiff, who might restore to Rome one of her two luminaries. When afterwards, in June of the same year, the valiant captain Ugucione della Faggiuola made himself master of Lucca, Dante repaired to that city, which he had previously censured, but which a noble and youthful lady now made pleasant to him. Perhaps, while he remained there, he may have had the sad consolation of seeing the chastisements of God fall upon the Florentines, who, having been defeated on the 29th August by Ugucione della Faggiuola, at Montecatini, bewailed their dead "in almost every one of the great houses, and in almost every one of the houses of the great bourgeois." Ugucione was driven from the lordship of Pisa and Lucca in April, 1316. If Dante was in Lucca when this happened, he must have been obliged to leave and seek a refuge elsewhere. The traces of him are thenceforth once more wrapped in darkness, and we do not know, with any certainty, whither he bent his wandering steps.

Neither the chronicler Villani nor the ancient biographers have left us any information with regard to Dante's life in the first years after the death of Henry VII. All that they tell us has been quoted above (Chap. III, § 8). There was a tradition among the people of Agubbio that Dante sojourned for some time in that city, in the houses of the Raffaelli, having been received by Bosone, who is supposed to have been a friend. Nay, a later inscription even tells us in what house the Poet lived. There is a story also that Dante instructed a son of Bosone's in Greek, — which he did not know himself! Though it is not improbable that Dante spent some time of his life in Agubbio, since traditions are not usually made out of whole cloth, it is, nevertheless, very uncertain at what time this happened. Unvarying, on the other hand, and perhaps better founded, is the tradition that, after the death of Henry VII, Dante retired to the monastery of Santa Croce, where an inscription, dating from the year 1567, tells what room he occupied. The condition of mind in which he must naturally have been, when he heard of Henry's death, renders his retirement to the monastery highly probable, and the manner in which he describes the situation of the monastery of Santa Croce shows that he must really have been there.<sup>1</sup> There are, therefore, no grounds for doubting that the ancient tradition has an historic foundation.

With regard to Dante's sojourn at Lucca, we have his own testimony. In the *Purgatory*, he makes Bonagiunta Orbiciani

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[<sup>1</sup> Between two shores of Italy, rise cliffs,  
 And not far distant from thy native place,  
 So high, the thunders far below them sound,  
 And form a ridge that Catria is called,  
 'Neath which is consecrate a hermitage  
 Wont to be dedicate to worship only.  
 — *Parad.*, XXI, 106 sqq. (Longfellow's Translation).]



of Lucca prophesy to him: "A woman is born and does not yet wear veil, who will make my city please thee, albeit men revile it."<sup>1</sup> From these words we may infer that he went to Lucca some years after 1300, the supposed date of the vision, and that he remained there some considerable time. Now, as we cannot suppose that Dante went to live at Lucca either while the Lucchese were the allies of those Florentines who had condemned him to be burnt alive, if ever he should come within the power of the Commune, or after the revolution of 1316, there remains no other period to which we can assign this sojourn at Lucca than the time when Uguccione della Faggiuola was master of it; that is, from the 14th June, 1314, to the 10th April, 1316.

The lady who made pleasant to Dante his sojourn at Lucca bore the name of Gentucca. Two ladies of good family, bearing this name, are known to have lived in Lucca at that time, one the wife of Bernardo Morla degli Antelminelli Allucinghi, the other the wife of Buonaccorso di Lazzaro di Fondora. But it is vain to attempt to guess whether either of these, and, if so, which, was the lady eulogized by Dante. If there were two Gentuccas at Lucca, there may have been more.

It need not be said that the relations between Dante, now fifty years old, and the youthful lady were altogether pure and honorable. Francesco da Buti,<sup>2</sup> who certainly ought to have known about things in Pisa and Lucca, says that Dante "being in Lucca, set his love upon a gentlewoman named Gentucca, of Rossimpelo, on account of the great virtue and honor that

[<sup>1</sup> Femmina è nata, e non porta ancor benda,  
(Cominciò ei), che ti farà piacere  
La mia città, come ch' uom la riprenda.

— *Purg.*, XXIV, 43 sqq.]

[<sup>2</sup> One of the early commentators on *The Divine Comedy*. See Part II, Chap. I, § 3.]

were in her." In truth, a woman of dissolute habits could not have made the city of Lucca pleasant to any one, least of all to a man like Dante.

Dante's letter to the Italian cardinals is mentioned even by the chronicler Villani (*Cronica*, IX, 136). He says: "The third (noble letter he sent) to the Italian cardinals, during the vacancy which took place after the death of Pope Clement, in order to induce them to come to an understanding and elect an Italian Pope." It bears no date, but was, of course, written after the 20th April, 1314, the day on which Clement V died. It is said to have been written before the violence offered to the Italian cardinals by the Gascon party, on the 14th July, 1314. But, if Dante was then in the monastery of Santa Croce,<sup>1</sup> some time must have elapsed before the news reached him, so that the letter may have been written even some time after that occurrence.

Regarding the defeat of the Florentines at Montecatini, Villani (*Cronica*, IX, 72) says: "Belonging to Florence there were slain or taken prisoners cavaliers of the militia from nearly all the houses of the Grandees, as well as from those of the great bourgeois, to the number of 114, as well as cavaliers belonging to the best families of Siena, Perugia, Bologna, and the other lands of Tuscany and of the Romagna. In that battle the whole number of the slain, between cavalry and infantry, was 2000; that of the captives, 1500." (See above, Chap. III, § 8, at the end.)

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[<sup>1</sup> He may, however, have been at Lucca before that time. The letter reads as if some recent event in Dante's life had inspired him with new hope. Curiously enough, the letter opens with exactly the same words as a letter which Dante tells us he wrote to the "princes of the earth" after the death of Beatrice, viz.: *Quomodo sedet sola civitas* (Lamentations of Jeremiah, I, 1).]

§ 5. THE GREAT REFUSAL. — At this time, the gates of Dante's native city were opened to him, and he might have returned home, if he would have but condescended to submit to degradation. After the expulsion of Ugucione della Faggiuola, the Florentines, with the rest of the Tuscan Guelph party, had thenceforth no powerful enemy to fear. Then, during the mayorship of Count Guido di Battifolle, they made provisions and decrees whereby they allowed all the exiles to return to Florence, on condition of submitting to humiliating, and almost dishonorable, terms. Many yielded; even Dante was encouraged by Florentine friends to yield. But, although he had for so many years eagerly longed to return to his native place, yet so strong in him was the feeling of his own dignity that he preferred to go on eating the bread of exile, and, with noble dignity, refused to enter Florence by the path of self-abasement.

The document upon which our knowledge of this fact rests is Dante's letter to a Florentine friend, written in Latin. We here reproduce it in a translation :<sup>1</sup>—

“From your letter, which I welcomed with due reverence and affection, I have gratefully and carefully gathered how deeply you are concerned in the matter of my restoration to my native land; and I am all the more deeply indebted to you, because it rarely falls to the lot of exiles to find friends. But I will reply to the gist of your letter, and, if my reply be not such as the low-mindedness of some persons would desire, I beg you,

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[<sup>1</sup> The author reproduces Fraticelli's translation. I have translated directly from the Latin. — *Translator.*]



in all affection, before judging it, to sift it carefully under the scrutiny of your good sense.

"This, then, is what has been signified to me through the letters of your nephew and mine, as well as of several other friends, as the gist of the ordinance lately made at Florence in regard to the pardon of the exiles : that, if I were willing to pay a certain sum of money and submit to the stigma of being offered up as a sin-offering, I might be pardoned and return at once. In all this, there are two things that are absurd and ill-advised, my Father. I mean that they are ill-advised by those who have expressed such notions ; for your letter, couched in discreet and cautious terms, contains nothing of the kind.

"Is this, then, the glorious recall by which Dante Alighieri is restored to his country, after having borne exile for well-nigh fifteen years? Is this the reward of innocence patent to every one? Of sweat and incessant toil spent in study? Far from a man, the familiar friend of philosophy, be the reckless humility of a heart of dirt, that would allow him, like a certain Cioli and other infamous persons, to make an offering of himself, as if he were a caitiff!<sup>1</sup> Far be it from a man, the preacher of justice, that, after having suffered wrongs, he should pay his money to those who have inflicted these wrongs, as if they were his benefactors !

"This is not the way for me to return to my country, my Father ; but, if any other way can be discovered, by you or by any one else, which does not touch the fame of Dante and his honor, that I will accept with alacrity. But, if by no such way Florence is to be entered, then Florence I shall never enter."<sup>2</sup>

[<sup>1</sup> Reading *victus*, not *vinctus*, as Mr. Lowell, following Giuliani, seems to do (*Dante*, p. 15).]

[<sup>2</sup> *Nunquam Florentiam introibo*. Carlyle, strangely enough, misquotes this passage, in his *Lectures on Heroes*. He makes Dante say, "If I cannot return without calling myself guilty, I will never return, *nunquam*

And what then? Can I not see the mirrors of the sun and the stars everywhere? Can I not contemplate the sweetest truths anywhere under heaven, rather than render myself inglorious, yea, most ignominious, to the people and the Commonwealth of Florence? And bread, I trust, will not fail me."

This letter bears no date; but it must have been written in 1316, as we see from Dante's remark that he had been an exile for nearly fifteen years. And, as a matter of fact, in 1316 three ordinances were made at Florence for the restoration of the rebels and exiles: the first on the 2d June; the second on the 3d September; the third on the 11th December.

It is clear, from the letter, that it was addressed to an ecclesiastic. And, as this person and Dante had a nephew in common, he may have been either a Brunacci, a brother of Piera Brunacci, the wife of Francesco Alighieri, or a Poggi, a brother of the husband of Dante's sister.

The conditions were, *first*, that he should pay a certain sum of money; *second*, that, humbly and with downcast countenance, with a paper-mitre on his head (a sign of infamy) and a candle in his hands, he should march in procession, behind the chariot of the mint, to the church of St. John, and there make an offering to the saint in atonement for crimes committed. They were the same conditions which, in accordance with an ancient custom, the Florentines imposed upon the malefactors whom they pardoned.

The *Cioli* named by Dante is probably Ciolo degli Abati, of the ward of Porta San Piero, whose name figures in the docu-

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*revertar.*" He is also wrong in saying, "Another curious document, some considerable number of years later, is a letter of Dante's to the Florentine magistrates, written in answer to a milder proposal of theirs, that he should return on condition of apologizing and paying a fine" (Lect., III). On the superficiality of Carlyle's knowledge of Dante, see Mr. Lowell's essay, p. 39.]

ment of the 2d September, 1311, among those of persons excluded from the amnesty.<sup>1</sup>

Alluding to this fact, Boccaccio says: "Our Poet was of a very high and disdainful spirit, so much so that, when a certain friend of his, at Dante's own request, took steps to have him restored to Florence, a thing which Dante desired above all things, and was able to obtain no other terms from those who at that time held the government of the Republic, except these: that Dante should remain for a certain time in prison; and then, at a public celebration, should be offered up in mercy in our principal church, and should then go free, and exempt from any sentence previously pronounced upon him, Dante, considering these conditions to be suitable and usual only for cowed and infamous men, and for no others, preferred, in spite of his strongest desire, to remain in exile, rather than return home in any such way. O praiseworthy pride of a great soul, with what manfulness didst thou act, in repressing thy ardent desire to return, rather than do so by a way less than worthy of a man nurtured in the lap of Philosophy!"

§ 6. THE LAST REFUGE. — In the last years of his life, Dante had a permanent abode at Ravenna, having been liberally entertained there by Guido Novello da Polenta, the nephew of that unhappy Francesca di Rimini, whom the Poet has rendered immortal in his affectionate and touching lines. Accustomed for long

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[<sup>1</sup> He seems to have been the person who, during a great fire in Florence, burnt his ledgers and then pretended that several persons owed him large sums of money. (See Fraticelli's note.) Mr. Lowell, following Witte, reads *scioli* for *Cioli*, and translates "schoolboy" (*Dante*, p. 15); but, even if we read "*more cujusdam scioli et aliorum infamium*," we cannot render "like a schoolboy or a criminal."]



years to wander through different countries, he was in the habit of leaving Ravenna from time to time and paying longer or shorter visits to the neighboring towns and cities. His longest stay seems to have been at Verona, where he was received and generously entertained by Can Grande della Scala. On one occasion, when he was at Verona, there arose a question with regard to the position of the two elements, water and earth. This question, "though many times diffusely discussed, for the sake of showy argumentation rather than truth, remained undecided." For this reason, Dante, who, "from his childhood, had been continually nurtured in the love of truth, could not endure to leave the question undiscussed, but resolved to show the truth with regard to it." Wherefore, he repaired anew to Verona, and there, in the church of St. Helena, near the cathedral, he sustained a dispute regarding the two elements, water and earth. "And," he adds, "lest the malice of the many, whose habit it is, out of envy,<sup>1</sup> to concoct lies against men in their absence, should garble my correct statements behind my back, I have resolved, further, to leave, on this sheet, written with my own fingers, what was established by me, and to outline the form of the whole dispute with my pen."<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile, even in these last days, the desire to return to Florence

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[<sup>1</sup> Reading *invidiosi*, instead of the usual *invidiosis*, which hardly makes sense. *Invidiosus* is very rare in the sense of enviable. Giuliani reads *invidiosa*. I here translate from the original.]

[<sup>2</sup> *Quaestio de Aqua et Terra*, § 1.]

continued to burn in his heart, and he hoped that the *Sacred Poem*, finally completed and published, would not only overcome "the cruelty which barred him out from the fair fold in which he slept when a lamb,"<sup>1</sup> but would, further, procure for him the honor of the beloved laurel, which he did not wish to take anywhere but in Florence.<sup>2</sup> For this reason, being invited by Giovanni del Virgilio to go to Bologna and receive the crown of laurel, he replied that, when the bodies that circle round the world and the celestial spirits should have been celebrated in his song, as the kingdoms of the Underworld had been, then he would be pleased to adorn his brow with ivy and with laurel,<sup>3</sup> as he hoped to do after

[<sup>1</sup> "Se mai continga che 'l poema sacro,  
Al quale ha posto mano e cielo e terra,  
Sì che m' ha fatto per più anni macro,  
Vinca la crudeltà che fuor mi serra  
Del bello ovile ov' io dormii agnello,  
Nimico ai lupi che gli danno guerra;  
Con altra voce omai, con altro vello  
Ritornerò poeta, ed in sul fonte  
Del mio battesimo prenderò 'l cappello."

— *Parad.*, XXV, 1 sqq.]

[<sup>2</sup> Nonne triumphales melius pexare capillos,  
Et patrio, redeam si quando, abscondere canos  
Fronda sub inserta solitum flavescere, Sarno?

— *Eclog.*, I, 42 sqq.

The last line proves that Dante was yellow-haired.]

[<sup>3</sup> Quum mundi circumflua corpora cantu  
Astricolaeque meo, velut infera regna, patebunt,  
Devincire caput hedera lauroque juvabit. — *Eclog.*, I, 48 sqq.

The phrase "*mundi circumflua corpora*" is here mistranslated by our author, who follows Giuliani and Fraticelli. The meaning is not, "the

returning to Florence. But it was fated that even this fair hope of Dante's should be disappointed. The Republic of Venice having made war on the Lord of Polenta, he sent Dante as his ambassador, to try to bring Venice back to a peaceful mood. On returning from Venice, he was taken seriously ill; his malady increased from day to day, and on the 14th September, 1321, Dante Alighieri breathed his last, at Ravenna, and went "to behold the glory of that blessed Beatrice

bodies that circle round the world" (which would be the stars, in which case "astricolae" would be superfluous); but "those purified in their circumfluent bodies," that is, the denizens of Purgatory. The phrase "circumfluent bodies" is explained by *Purg.*, XXV, 88 sqq.

Soon as [the] place there circumscribeth it,  
 The virtue informative rays round about,  
 As, and as much as, in the living members.  
 And even as the air, when full of rain,  
 By alien rays that are therein reflected,  
 With divers colors shows itself adorned,  
 So there the neighboring air doth shape itself  
 Into that form which doth impress upon it  
 Virtually the soul that has stood still.  
 And then in manner of the little flame  
 Which followeth the fire where'er it shifts,  
 After the spirit followeth its new form.

— Longfellow's Translation.

Dante means to say that, when he shall have finished the *Purgatory* and the *Paradise*, he will accept the laurel, — he hopes in Florence. This shows that, at the time when this Eclogue was written (1319–20), neither the *Purgatory* nor the *Paradise* was finished. I hardly know of any more curious and amusing misunderstanding and mistranslation than that of "*mundi circumflua corpora*." And the passage is of extreme importance, because it shows that even the *Purgatory* was not finished till within a short time of Dante's death. Cf. below, p. 135, and Pt. II, chap. III, § 7.]



who gloriously gazes upon the face of Him who is blessed for ever and ever." <sup>1</sup>

It is a matter beyond doubt that Dante passed the last years of his life at Ravenna, and that he had a fixed abode there. It is certain also that Dante's son, Pietro, went to Ravenna during his father's lifetime, and that he there received the livings of Santa Maria in Zenzanigola and San Simone in Muro, which were in the gift of Guido Novello. On the contrary, there is some dispute regarding the time when Dante went to Ravenna. Some hold that he went there about 1314, that is, shortly after the death of Henry VII; and that Boccaccio was of this opinion, seems to follow from his words. But the Guido Novello who entertained Dante did not come to the lordship of Ravenna until 1316, on the death of Lamberto Polentani. Besides, since there can be no doubt about Dante's stay in Lucca, and this, as we have seen, cannot have taken place at any other time than between the 14th June, 1314, and the 10th April, 1316, it is not only improbable, but almost impossible, that Dante should have gone to Ravenna before 1316.<sup>2</sup>

Others, on the contrary, maintain that Dante did not remove to Ravenna until 1319 or 1320. The chief motive which induces them to place the Poet's removal there so late, is the belief that he made a long stay with Can Grande della Scala at Verona. Now, this long stay at Verona is unknown to all his ancient biographers, nor can we infer it to have been a fact from what Dante himself tells us in the seventeenth canto of

[<sup>1</sup> *New Life*, closing words.]

[<sup>2</sup> Among Dante's letters is one (extant only in Italian) purporting to have been written in Venice on the 31st March, 1314 to Guido da Polenta, as prince; but, if Guido came to power only in 1316, it must be apocryphal. Mr. Lowell, overlooking the date, thinks the letter refers to the embassy of 1321 (*Dante*, p. 16).]

the *Paradise*,<sup>1</sup> and in the epistle to Can Grande. On the contrary, this letter is couched in terms which exclude the possibility of a long stay at the court of the Scaliger. We must conclude, therefore, that Dante had no fixed residence at Verona, but that he went there on a visit from Ravenna, where he had his fixed residence, and that probably he prolonged this visit more than was his wont, on account of the munificence of Can Grande. The anecdotes told about Dante's doings at the court of Can Grande, and the disagreeable things that happened to him there, are to be counted fables.

Dante's stay at Mantua is attested by himself in the beginning of the *Quaestio de Aqua et Terra*, and from the same work we learn that, on the 20th January, 1320, he was at Verona. It is further said that he sojourned for some time in the Castle of Paratico, above that of Brescia; at Udine, in the Castle of Tolmino, in Friuli, with Pagano della Torre, patriarch of Aquileia, etc. If Dante really made any stay in these places, it must have been in the way of excursions, or for the sake of being in the country. It is impossible to believe that in these years Dante changed his abode so often. He probably had a fixed residence in Ravenna from 1316 on.

As to the time when the two *Eclogues*, or poetical epistles, to Giovanni del Virgilio were written, we know nothing further with absolute certainty than that they belong to the last years of Dante's life, and that they were written at Ravenna — probably in 1319 or 1320.

Giovanni Boccaccio tells us: "At that time the Lord of Ravenna, a most famous and ancient city of the Romagna; was a noble knight, named Guido Novello da Polenta, who, being versed in liberal studies, honored very highly men of ability, and especially those who excelled in science. Word having

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[<sup>1</sup> XVII, 70. Cf. p. 130.]

come to his ear that Dante, bereft of all hope, was in the Romagna (having long before become acquainted with his worth through report), he made up his mind, considering Dante's hopeless condition, to receive him and do him honor. Nor did he wait until he was asked to do so ; but, with liberal spirit, considering how hard it is for men of worth to make requests, he took the initiative in making offers to him, asking, as a special favor of Dante, what he knew Dante ought to have asked of him,<sup>1</sup> namely, that he would be pleased to come and live with him. The two wills, then, that of the asked and that of the asker, having concurred in a common end, and Dante being extremely pleased with the liberality of the noble cavalier, as well as pressed by want, waited for no second invitation, but went to Ravenna, whose lord honorably received him, and having, with kindly encouragement, revived his sunken hopes and given him without stint such things as he required, kept him there with him for several years, nay, even to the last day of his life. . . . Dante then (having lost all hope, though not all desire, of ever returning to Florence) dwelt at Ravenna several years, under the protection of this lord ; and here, by means of his demonstrations, he taught several scholars in poetry, and especially in that written in the vulgar tongue. But, when the hour appointed for every man came to him, having already in the middle, or thereabouts, of his fifty-sixth year, fallen sick, and having humbly and most devoutly received every sacrament of the Church according to the Christian religion, and having reconciled himself to God, through contrition for every sin com-

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[<sup>1</sup> Boccaccio is here thinking of Cacciaguida's words to Dante in reference to another patron, Can Grande della Scala :—

“Che avrà in te sì benigno riguardo,  
 Che del fare e del chieder, tra voi due  
 Fia prima quel che tra gli altri e più tardo.”

— *Parad.*, XVII, 73 sqq.]



mitted by him, as a man, against his will, in the month of September, in the year of Christ 1321, on the day on which the Exaltation of the Cross is celebrated by the Church, to the very great grief of the above-named Guido, and, generally, of all the other citizens of Ravenna, he yielded up his weary spirit into the hands of his Creator."

Dante's embassy to Venice is attested by Giovanni Villani, who says: "In the said year, 1321, in the month of July (some codices read better 'September'), Dante Alighieri, of Florence, died in the city of Ravenna, in the Romagna, having returned from an embassy to Venice in the service of the lords of Polenta, with whom he was living." Filippo Villani's account is a little more diffuse. The particulars of the embassy are not known.

Martinetti-Cardoni, Gasparo: *Dante Alighieri in Ravenna*. Historical memoirs with documents. Ravenna, 1864.

Cappi, Alessandro: *Dante in Ravenna*. A Memoir in the volume, *Dante e il suo Secolo*, pp. 813-39.

Landoni, Teodorico. *Saggio del Dante in Ravenna*. A work divided into four books, now in course of publication. Bologna, 1867- .

Guerrieri, O., and Ricci, C.: *Studi e Polemiche Dantesche*. Bologna, 1880.

Scheffer-Boichorst, Paul: *Aus Dante's Verbannung*. Literar-historische Studien. Strassburg, 1882, pp. 1-102, 179-190.

§ 7. THE PEACE OF THE GRAVE. — Dante was buried at Ravenna, near the church of San Francesco, then called San Pier Maggiore, in the chapel of Our Lady, in a humble sepulchre, on account of the shortness of the time. Guido Novello, who read Dante's funeral oration, meant to erect a sumptuous mausoleum over him; but he was not permitted to carry out this pur-

pose, because, a short time afterwards, being betrayed by his cousin Ostasio, he lost his power and his life. For more than a century, Dante's bones lay in an obscure tomb, and even came near being disinterred and scattered to the winds, through the hatred which Cardinal Bertrand du Pojet, the legate of Pope John XXII, bore to the author of the treatise *De Monarchia*. In 1483, Bernardo Bembo,<sup>1</sup> father of Cardinal Bembo, having come to Ravenna as prætor for the Venetian Republic, tried to carry into effect the purpose of Guido Novello, by causing a magnificent monument, the work of the artist Pietro Lombardi, to be erected to the Supreme Poet. This monument was restored in 1692, through the influence of the governor, Domenico Corsi, papal legate, and in 1780, it was embellished and converted into a small temple by the Cardinal Legate Valenti Gonzaga.

In connection with the sacred sepulchre of Dante, Corsi, the Cardinal Legate, had to carry on a long struggle with the [Minorite] fathers of the Franciscan convent, who, too zealous to maintain and defend their right to the sacred deposit of the remains of the Supreme Poet, whom they considered to belong to their order, used every possible means to prevent themselves from ever being deprived of it. Accordingly, with the aid of Father Antonio Santi, they removed the remains, in 1677, from their known resting-place, and hid them

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[<sup>1</sup> Mr. Lowell confounds this Bernardo with his son. *Dante*, p. 16, note.]

in a wall, at a short distance from where they had been, determined that the historic truth should remain intact, that the tomb of Dante had always been there. The efforts of the municipality of Ravenna, on the occasion of the sixth centenary of Dante's birth, to give more prominence to the little temple, by clearing away the walls and buildings that surrounded it, led to the discovery of the precious treasure. On the 27th May, 1865, Friar Santi's box was found in a wall above ground, and within it were the remains of the Great Poet. With many other cities of Italy, Florence, which had so often vainly exerted herself to have the remains of her great citizen restored to her, erected a statue to him on the six-hundredth anniversary of his birth.

Giovanni Villani tells us that Dante "was buried at Ravenna before the gate of the principal church (*Chiesa Maggiore*) with great honor, in the habit of a poet and a great philosopher." He evidently made a slip in writing '*Chiesa Maggiore*' for '*Chiesa di San Pier Maggiore*.' The double habit mentioned by him may be supposed to mean certain emblems.

Boccaccio, who must have been well informed on this subject, writes: "The munificent knight caused the body of Dante to be adorned with poetic emblems upon a funeral couch, and this he caused to be carried on the shoulders of his most eminent citizens to the place of the Minorite Friars in Ravenna, with that honor which he considered due to such a body. Hither he followed it, amid almost public lamentation, and caused it to be placed in a stone sarcophagus, in which it still lies. And, returning to the house in which Dante had been living, in accordance with the custom of Ravenna, he himself delivered a long and ornate address, eulogizing the profound



science and virtue of the departed, and consoling the friends whom he had left to a most disconsolate life. Further, he meant, if his power and life had been spared, to honor him with so noble a sepulchre, that, if no other noble act of his had rendered him memorable to posterity, this alone would have done so. This laudable intention soon reached the ears of some persons, who at that time were the most eminent poets in the Romagna; whereupon each of them, — either to show his own sufficiency, or to bear testimony to the good will he had borne the deceased poet, or to obtain the favor and affection of the Seigneur, — knowing that he desired verses, wrote some suitable to be placed, as an epitaph, upon the future tomb, to inform posterity, with due praises, who rested therein, and sent them to the munificent lord, who, through a great sin of Fortune, shortly after lost his State and died at Bologna. For which reason, the projected sepulchre was not built: nor were the verses contributed inscribed upon it.”<sup>1</sup>

Dante's sepulchre has a long history, which, like that of his life, is partly dark and disputed. Here, the few remarks above given must suffice. Besides the above-named works of Marinetti-Cardoni and Cappi, the following may be consulted: —

Anonym.: *Il Sepolcro di Dante*. Florence, 1783.

Dionisi, G. G.: *Nuove Indagini intorno al Sepolcro di Dante Alighieri in Ravenna* (Anedd. VII). Verona, 1799.

Borgognoni, Ad.: *Il Sepolcro di Dante*. Florence, 1865.

Anonym.: *Notizie Storiche relative al Ritrovo della Cassetta contenente le Ossa di Dante*. Ravenna, 1865.

Vannucci, Atto: *Relazione della Commissione governativa eletta a verificare il Ritrovamento delle Ossa di Dante a Ravenna*. Florence, 1865.

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[<sup>1</sup> One set of these verses has been preserved for us by Boccaccio, namely, those made by Giovanni del Virgilio.]

*Della Scoperta delle Ossa di Dante.* Relazione con Documento, per Cura del Municipio di Ravenna. Ravenna, 1870.

[Witte, Karl: *Dante's Gebeine in Ravenna*, in *Dante-Forschungen*, Vol. II, pp. 32-42.]

In 1396, the people of Florence for the first time thought of asking Ravenna to allow Dante's remains to be transferred to Florence. The request was not actually made, however, until 1430. Some secret negotiations with regard to the transfer were carried on in the years 1475-6, between Lorenzo de' Medici and Bernardo Bembo. According to some, it was similar negotiations that induced Friar Santi and his brethren to conceal the sacred bones. In 1519, the Florentine Academicians wrote, with a similar view, to Leo X; Michelangelo added to his signature an offer "to make for the *Divine Poet* a becoming tomb in an honorable place,"<sup>1</sup> in Florence. In the spring of 1830, the first monument raised to Dante in Florence was unveiled. Finally, in 1864, the municipality of Florence addressed to the city of Ravenna a request "to obtain, as a fraternal gift, — all the nobler, the sadder it was, — the restitution of the remains of Dante, and to be allowed to place, on the spot where they had been preserved, an inscription recording the generosity of Ravenna and the gratitude of Florence." This request Ravenna declared it could not entertain. The documents referring to the subject may be found in Del Lungo, *Dell' Esilio di Dante*, Florence, 1881.

Boccaccio writes: "This poet of ours was of medium height, and when he reached mature age, walked a little bent. His gait was grave and gentle; he was always clad in most becoming garments, in that habit which was suitable to his maturity. His face was long, his nose aquiline, his eyes rather large than small, his jaws large, his upper lip projecting a little over the

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[<sup>1</sup> Di fare al divin Poeta la sepoltura sua condecante e in loco onorevole.]

lower, his complexion brown, his hair and beard thick, black, and curling, and his face always melancholy and thoughtful."<sup>1</sup>

On Dante's portrait we have a long series of studies. Many of them are to be found in the *Giornale del Centenario di Dante*. Florence, 1864-5. Besides these, the following works may be consulted : —

Milanesi, Gaetano and Passerini, L. : *Sul Ritratto di Dante nella Capella del Podestà in Firenze attribuito a Giotto*. Florence, 1865. [This work, which denies that the portrait in the Chapel of the Podestà is by Giotto, called forth much controversy and opposition. After Passerini's death, Milanesi wrote a second "Report," the most important parts of which are reproduced in the author's edition of Vasari (*Le Opere di Giorgio Vasari*. Florence, Sansoni, 1878- ). Vol. I, pp. 413-22.]

Norton, Charles Eliot : *On the Original Portraits of Dante*. Cambridge, Mass., 1865. [Cf. Longfellow's *Dante*, Vol. I, pp. 363-71.]

Paur, Theodor : *Dante's Portrait. Jahrbuch der deutschen Dante-Gesellschaft*. Vol. II, Leipzig, 1869, pp. 261-330; Vol. III, *ibid.*, 1871, pp. 528 sqq.

§ 8. POSTERITY. — By his wife, Gemma Donati, Dante had several children. The number of these is uncertain and a matter of dispute. History knows the names of only three, Pietro, Jacopo, and Beatrice. This last, after the death of her father, assumed the religious habit in the monastery of St. Stephen, called dell' Uliva,

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[<sup>1</sup> This description is plainly taken in part from a portrait and is, in particulars which Dante's portraits do not give, incorrect. For example, we know from Dante himself that he had yellow hair (*solitum flavescere*, *Eclog.* I), not black hair, as Boccaccio tells us.]



at Ravenna. In the year 1350, the captains of Or San Michele, in Florence, sent her a subsidy of ten gold florins, through Giovanni Boccaccio. When she died, is unknown. Jacopo, in his youth, entered the Church, and, on the 1st October, 1326, received the first two clerical orders at the hands of the bishop of Fiesole; held the canonship of a parish (*picve*) of St. George in the diocese of Verona; but, about 1345, he doffed his ecclesiastical robes and united himself in matrimony to Jacopa di Bigliotto degli Alfani. He lived from 1346 onwards in Florence, where it is supposed he died about 1360. His male descendants ended with his sons. His daughter, Alighiera, was the mother of Francesca, who married Manfredi di Bernardo Manfredi. Pietro was a lawyer and a very able man. He lived from 1332 onwards in Verona, where he was several times viceprovost, and for a long time held the office of judge. He died in 1364, according to some, at Verona, to others, at Treviso. By his wife, Jacopa, daughter of Dolcetto dei Salerni, he had several children. His last descendant who bore his name was Ginevra, who, in 1549, married Marcantonio Sarego, a member of one of the noblest houses of Italy. In the veins of the Sarego-Alighieri, of Verona, the blood of the Supreme Poet, Dante Alighieri, runs to this day. There seems to be no doubt that there was another daughter born to the Poet, whose name is unknown, but who married a Pantaleoni, and was the mother of two sons, Pietro and Tommaso Pantaleoni, named in their uncle's will.

Boccaccio states that Dante, by his wife Gemma, had several children. Leonardo Bruni says Dante had several children, but speaks only of Pietro. "Dante had several children, among them a son named Pietro, who studied law to some purpose, and who, both on account of his own virtue and of the prestige coming from his father's memory, grew to be a great man, made a large fortune, and settled at Verona in very excellent circumstances. This Messer Pietro had a son named Dante, the father of Lionardo, who is still living and has several children." Modern biographers are not agreed with respect to the number of Dante's children, some giving him seven, others six. Some, again, forgetting Pietro's will, maintain that he had only three. There is documentary evidence that Dante had four children, two sons and two daughters. Whether he had any others that died in childhood, is very doubtful. But a certain Gabriel, who was living in 1351, was certainly not a son of Dante's, since, in the documents of 1341 and following years, Pietro and Jacopo appear as Dante's sole heirs.

As this is not the place to write the history and genealogy of Dante's descendants, we refer the reader to the following works :

Passerini, L. : *Della Famiglia di Dante*, in the volume *Dante e il suo Secolo*, pp. 53-78. (Contains a genealogical tree.)

Frullani, Emilio, and Gargani : *Della Casa di Dante*. Florence, 1865. (Contains several important documents regarding Dante's posterity, and, on p. 57, a *Genealogy of the Alighieri Family*.)

Cavattoni, Cesare : *Documenti fin qui remasti inediti che risguardano alcuni Posterì di Dante Alighieri*, in the *Albo Dantesco Veronese*. Milan, 1865, pp. 347-424.

§ 9. APOTHEOSIS. — In Dante the love of fame was strong, although he was far from estimating it beyond

its true value, knowing, as he did, that worldly applause is but a breath of wind, and human renown the color of grass, which comes and goes and is destroyed by time.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, he labored hard to obtain fame, and feared to lose life among posterity, if he should be a timid friend of the truth.<sup>2</sup> It was not granted him to attain much fame while he lived. No magnificent titles, no long-desired laurel, no noisy honors, no splendid gifts, fell to his lot. His contemporaries gave him exile, his country's curse, condemnation to death; they made him go up and down others' stairs; they meted out to him the bread that savors of salt; they left him to wander about the world, a pilgrim, almost a beggar, showing, against his will, the wound of fortune.<sup>3</sup> But it was destined that, after his death, he should attain that fame which he had longed for, yea, and a fame that he would have hardly dared to imagine even in his wildest dreams. While human fame, in most instances, slowly diminishes until, at last, it is extinguished, Dante's fame, with the lapse of ages, has gone on continually increasing and spreading. Obscured for a time, in an age of de-

[<sup>1</sup> Non è il mondan rumor altro che un fiato  
Di vento, che or vien quinci ed or vien quindi,  
E muta nome perchè muta lato. — *Purg.*, XI, 100 sqq.]

La vostra nominanza è color d' erba,  
Che viene è va, e quei la discolora,  
Per cui ell' esce dalla terra acerba. — *Ibid.*, 115 sqq.]

[<sup>2</sup> *Parad.*, XVII, 118; see above, p. 28.]

[<sup>3</sup> *Feast*, I, 3; see above, p. 84.]



cadence and degradation, it arose again with renewed and increased splendor, to reach its culmination six centuries after the poet's death, and to last while the world endures. As soon as his chief poem was published, the admiration for it was universal. From the first literary men of the time down to the professional scribe, the cook, and the wretched prisoner, all copied those sublime chants, so that, in the fifteenth century, *The Comedy* was far more widely diffused than thousands and tens of thousands of printed works are in the nineteenth. And the great Poet had hardly closed his eyes, when the learned were already exerting themselves to unveil, if perchance they might, the doctrine concealed under the veil of the strange verses,<sup>1</sup> writing glosses and comments, which, in great part, were destined to come to life again after the lapse of centuries. Dante had been in his grave half a century, when Florence established a chair of Dante. This was occupied for the first time on 3d October, 1375, by Giovanni Boccaccio, who proceeded to expound to the sons of those citizens who had banished, condemned, and cursed Dante and his sons, the cunning text, the innumerable stories, and the sublime meanings, hidden under the poetic veil of that *Comedy* which the admiration of posterity baptized *Divine*. Pisa, Piacenza, Milan, Venice, Bergamo, and

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[<sup>1</sup> O voi, ch' avete gl' intelletti sani  
Mirate la dottrina che s' asconde  
Sotto 'l velame dei versi strani. — *Hell*, IX, 61 sqq.]

other Italian cities imitated the example of Florence. Everywhere in the peninsula, chairs of Dante were established ; everywhere the sacred poem was read, commented on, and admired. No sooner was the art of printing invented than printers and publishers set to work to diffuse the sublime and mysterious book. The result is, that scarcely any book in the world has been so often reprinted. The highest geniuses of the nation, in every age since that of Dante, have labored over the great volume ; art has drawn its inspirations from it ; and when, at last, after long thralldom, the spirit of freedom and of nationality again awoke, Dante was proclaimed the prophet, teacher, and father of the unity and liberty of his country. Toward the close of the nineteenth century, his name is upon every lip ; everywhere statues are erected to him, — in all cities, streets, and squares ; and schools and colleges adorn themselves with the name of Dante Alighieri.

Nor has his fame been confined to Italy. It has crossed seas and mountains, diffusing itself, like a torrent that grows ever wider and deeper, among all civilized peoples ; yea, diffusing itself, beyond the limits of the Old World, in a world whose very existence was unknown to him and his age. *The Comedy*, at the present day, is read in between twenty and thirty languages. There is no nation laying claim to any culture that does not boast of a native Dante literature of some sort, and that does not contribute, more or less to enabling us to arrive at an ever deeper understanding of the sublime

teaching hidden under the verses of Dante Alighieri. All admire and honor him.

It is true that he has not been without envious opponents and detractors. And it was not only in the sixteenth century, when literary men of the order of Bularini, Lenzoni, and Mazzoni waged a furious war on him, that accusations of every kind rained from all directions ; but, from that poor Cecco d' Ascoli [Francesco Stabili] who brutally attacked Dante, down to those who, in our own day, have dared to call their own abominations by his name, there have never been wanting, even among his self-styled friends, enviers, detractors, and calumniators. They have accused him of libertinism, adultery, bitter partisanship, lying, heresy, socialism, etc. But the sun cannot be darkened, and wherever good and honorable men bestow admiration, they admire, and will admire, in Dante Alighieri, the most glorious sun that has appeared in the literary heaven, at any time or among any people.

The story of Dante's fame and of his varying fortune has yet to be written. Valuable aids thereto are to be found in the works mentioned in the Bibliography to Part I, Chap. I. Besides these, we have several monographs, regarding which consult Ferrazzi's *Manuale Dantesco*, Vol. IV, pp. 50 sqq. The most important study on this subject — one which unfortunately does not reach beyond the middle of the fourteenth century — is the following : —

Carducci, Giosuè : *Della varia Fortuna di Dante*, in his *Studi letterari*. Leghorn, 1874, pp. 239-370.



Of the different editions and translations of *The Comedy*, as well as of the ancient and modern commentaries on the same, some account will be found in Part II, Chap. I. Here let us reproduce a few sentences from Ferrari's *Corso sugli Scrittori politici Italiani* : —

“The Divine Epopœa is so associated with the periodical changes of the nation that, like the sun and moon, it undergoes eclipse, reappearing with greater splendor at determinate intervals. In the fifteenth century it disappears ; the chairs, founded by the different governments to expound it, are suppressed ; for a long time it is forgotten. Then, all at once, amid the lightnings of St. Bartholomew's Eve, at the moment when the great Catholic and Protestant revolutions break out, a noisy polemic, stirred up by Varchi, brings it again upon the scene, and arouses thought on the massacres of the Church and tyrannies of the Empire. A new eclipse follows this outbreak ; but very soon Vico, preceded by Gravina, finds that he cannot write a commentary upon the revolutions of right, without placing Dante beside Homer, among the primitive bards whose second sight foreshadows the whole history of the nation to which they belong.

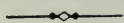
“Later still, another eclipse cuts off the light of *The Divine Comedy*. Bettinelli derides it, Voltaire despises it, an ironical age consigns it to the lumber-room of old Latin heirlooms, and Virgil, like a free-and-easy journalist, marvels that he has made so long a journey among Christian fables. But, since the beginning of our century, which is the century of revolutions, the century which throws doubt upon both Pope and Emperor, the century which began by proclaiming the worship of Reason, and means to end with the renovation of the world (I mean the century beginning with 1786), Monti, Foscolo, Perticari, and all the celebrities of Italy have vied with each other in eagerness to exalt *The Divine Comedy*, have grown enthusiastic over this primitive monument of our Right, of which no ex-

pression ever seemed more practical or more recent, because no generation was ever nearer denying the principle of it. In such manner do the masterpieces of the human spirit grow in beauty. Beliefs perish, leaving for admiration the splendor of their past embodiment. The Goddess is no longer adored; but the incomparable statue inspired by her, — none can sculpture it as Pheidias did, and Pheidias himself becomes a god."

[The following is a brief chronology of the more important events that happened during the third period of Dante's life : —

- 1314. Lucca taken by Uguccione della Faggiuola. — Death of Clement V. — Death of Philip the Fair (*Hell*, XIX, 83 sqq.). — Battle of Morgarten. — Battle of Bannockburn. — Birth of Boccaccio.
- 1315. Defeat of the Florentines, at Montecatini, by Uguccione. — Dissection first taught at Bologna. — Death of Raymond Lull. — Rise of the Lollards.
- 1316. Uguccione expelled from Lucca and Pisa. — John XXII Pope. — University of Ferrara founded. — Death of Pietro d' Abano. — Death of Louis X. — Florentine exiles allowed to return on humiliating terms.
- 1317. Robert of Naples senator of Rome. — Pope imposes taxes on all countries. — Rinaldo Obizzo III and Niccolò I lords of Ferrara. — The "Extravagantes Joannis" published.
- 1318. Robert of Naples lord of Genoa. — Many Franciscans join the Beghards (*Parad.*, XII, 106 sqq.). — Order of St. George introduced. — King of Hungary marries Beatrice, daughter of Henry VII. — French Franciscans persecuted.
- 1319. Rise of the White Friars. — Oligarchy in Venice.
- 1320. New Crusade of the Pastoreaux. — Death of John of Pisa.
- 1321. Persecution of lepers in France.]

## PART II.



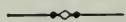
## DANTE'S WORKS.





## CHAPTER I.

### BIBLIOGRAPHICAL.



#### A. THE DIVINE COMEDY.

§ I. MANUSCRIPTS. — The various readings in the text of *The Divine Comedy* are without number, and hundreds of them are subjects of controversy. For this reason, criticism is obliged to go back to as near the primitive sources as possible, in order to fix the genuine text of the poem as it was left by its author. The most pure and primitive source, which, if we could find it, would save us the trouble of having recourse to secondary sources, would be Dante's own autograph. Unfortunately, that autograph has not for centuries been known to exist, being perhaps destroyed by time, and perhaps hidden away in some corner of the earth; nay, we do not know that there exists a single word written by the hand that wrote the *Sacred Poem*. Hence, we must turn to manuscript copies. These will, of course, be more likely to offer a genuine text, the older they are, and the more nearly they approach the time of Dante. But, since the number of manuscripts at present known is over 500, to record all the various readings of them would not only be a Herculean

task, but a useless one. Since these manuscripts are, of course, derived one from another, the business of the critic is to study them accurately and to form a genealogical tree of them. As soon as this is completed, there will be but a few primitive manuscripts to consult, while the multitude of secondary ones may be disregarded, as useless to the critic, since they offer only errors of copyists, or corrections of sciolists, who ventured to corrupt the text of the *Sacred Poem*.

The known manuscripts of *The Comedy*, written between 1333 and 1400, number 110. (See Carducci, *Studi Letterari*, p. 249.) The most detailed description of the MSS. of *The Comedy* is given by De Batines, in his *Bibliografia Dantesca*, Vol. II, pp. 1-227. Alongside this fundamental work, the student may consult the following accounts of manuscripts:—

*Illustrazione del Codice Grumelli dell' anno 1402.* Bergamo, 1865.

Fulin, Rinaldo: *I Codici Veneti della Divina Commedia.* Venice, 1865.

Contini, Efsio: *Di un nuovo Codice della Divina Commedia.* Florence, 1865.

Lorini, Agramante: *Le Varianti della Divina Commedia tolte dal Codice Membranaceo Cortonese.* Cortona, 1858.

Pollastrelli, B., and Fioruzzi, C.: *Il Codice Landiano della Divina Commedia di Dante Alighieri.* Piacenza, 1845.

Mussafia, Adolfo: *Sul Testo della Divina Commedia.* Pt. I, *I Codici di Vienna e di Stoccarda.* Vienna, 1865.

Mario, Alberto: *Dante e i Codici Danteschi.* Mantua, 1869.

Barlow, H. C.: *Critical, Historical, and Philosophical Contributions to the Study of the Divina Commedia.* London, 1864.



Among the MSS. thus far known, the following are the most celebrated : —

- (1) The Santa Croce, called also the Villani MS., written in 1343. Laurentian Library, Florence.
- (2) The Tempiano Maggiore MS., written in 1398. Laurentian Library, Florence.
- (3) The Poggiali MS. National Library, Florence.
- (4) The Este MS. Library of the Duke of Este, Modena.
- (5) The Landiano (1336). Landi Library, Piacenza.
- (6) The Trivulziano (1337). Trivulzi Library, Milan.
- (7) The Bartoliniano. Udine.
- (8) The so-called Petrarch MS. Vatican, Rome.

Some MSS. have been printed, but very few of them with diplomatic fidelity. The following deserve mention : —

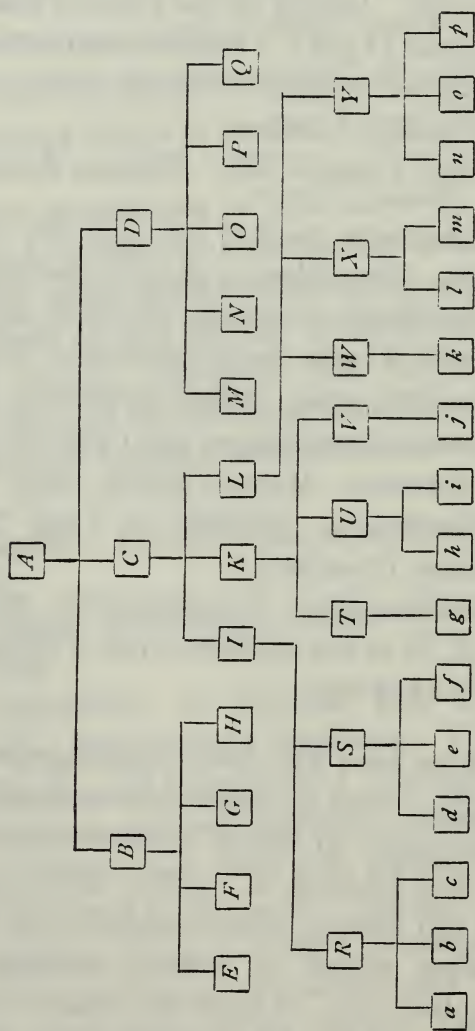
Fantoni, G. : *La Divina Commedia di Dante Alighieri, manoscritta da Boccaccio*. Roveta "negli occhi santi di Bice." 1820.

*Il Codice Cassinese della Divina Commedia, per la prima Volta letteralmente messo a Stampa per Cura dei Monaci della Badia di Monte Cassino*. Monte Cassino, 1865. Magnificent volume, in very large 4to. [Edited by Luigi Tosti, Andrea Caravita, and Cesare Quandel.]

Palermo, F. : *Il Paradiso*. A reproduction of the so-called *Quinterno*, in Vol. II of the excellent work, *I Manoscritti Palatini di Firenze*, pp. 557 sqq.

The rule which we have laid down regarding the true method of consulting MSS. seems so simple and natural, that it might be thought superfluous to spend another word on it. Yet, hitherto no one has followed it. Many, on the contrary, have added, and are still adding, unnecessarily to our Dante literature, by publishing masses of various readings taken from MSS. which they have had, or have, the chance of examining, without ever looking to the genealogy of these MSS., although

this ought to be the first consideration, and the foundation of all studies bearing upon textual criticism. Since the known MSS. belong to different periods, it is a matter of course that they are of different value, and that it is useless to record the errors of copyists. An imaginary genealogical tree will make this plain.



A simple glance at this tree shows at once the necessity of making out the genealogy of MSS., and the uselessness of collecting various readings at random. If a student has collated MSS. *R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y*, he would be throwing away labor, if, once knowing the genealogy of the MSS., he should collect the various readings of the sixteen MSS., *a-p*; because these sixteen MSS., being copied from the other eight, can have no various readings but errors of copyists or arbitrary corrections. But further, it would be useless to collate the MSS. *R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y*, if we were sure that they were copied from *I, K, L*. If we could examine these, we should no longer spend any time on the other eight, but, instead, should collate the MSS. belonging to other families, viz., *E, F, G, H* and *M, N, O, P, Q*. But, since even the twelve MSS. have parents, we shall go on with their genealogy; and, when we have proved that they are derived from the MSS. *B, C, D*, we shall care nothing further for them, but shall content ourselves with examining the three MSS. *B, C, D*; and even these three we shall cast aside when we have found out that they are derived from the common source *A*. It is sufficiently plain that, in these things, number is of very small account. Of what use would it be to oppose the authority of MS. *A* that of the other thirty-eight MSS. *B-Y*, and *a-p*? *A* would be the only MS. having any authority; none of the other thirty-eight would have the least value for the critic. "We are told," says Borghini, "of a man who wrote a hundred copies of Dante, and married off ever so many daughters with the proceeds. Some of these still exist. They are called the 'Hundred MSS.,' and are reasonably good." Now, if we had before us all these hundred MSS., and alongside them the MS. *L*, from which the man copied, it is perfectly plain that *L* alone would have authority, while the "Hundred" would have none whatsoever — for critics.

But the genealogical tree of the MSS. of *The Comedy* has yet



to be made. We do not know if ever it will be, or when it will be, made ; but we know that it will never be possible to settle the text of the *Sacred Poem*, until this most arduous, but not impossible, task has been accomplished.

§ 2. EDITIONS. — Since the fifteenth century, there have appeared over 300 editions of *The Comedy*. Valuable, but hard to obtain, are several editions of the fifteenth century, especially the four primitive ones [those of Foligno, Iesi, Mantua, and Naples : see below], the *Vindelina*,<sup>1</sup> the *Nidobeatina*,<sup>2</sup> and the first *Florentine*,<sup>3</sup> with the commentary of Landino.

The two Aldine editions of 1502 and 1515 rose to great fame, so that the text of Aldus became the foundation of the commonly received one. Among the other editions of the sixteenth century, the chief are the *Giuntina* and the *Della Crusca*. In the seventeenth century, only three editions were published, all of little value. The most famous editions of the eighteenth century are (1) the *Cominiana*, (2) the *Roman*, with Lombardi's commentary, (3) the *Bodoniana*, edited by Dionisi. In the first eight decades of the nineteenth century, there appeared about 250 editions, among which the most noteworthy are : the *Pisan* (1804), the *Leghorn* (1807), the *Milanese* (1809), the *Roman* (1815-17), the *Florentine* (1817-19), the *Paduan* (1822), several

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[<sup>1</sup> Published by Wendelin of Speyer, Venice, 1477.]

[<sup>2</sup> Published by Nidobeat, Milan, 1477-78.]

[<sup>3</sup> Florence, 1481.]

times republished, the *Udinese* (1823), the *Florentine* (1837), the *London* (1842), the *Ravenna* (1848), the *Mon-dovì* (1865), and the microscopical *Milanese* (1878).

The early editions of Foligno, Iesi, Mantua, and Naples were textually reproduced by Lord Vernon, in the magnificent volume edited by Panizzi [Librarian of the British Museum]: —

*Le Prime Quattro Edizioni della Divina Commedia, letteralmente ristampate per Cura di G. G. Warren, Lord Vernon.* London, Boone, 1858, in very large 4to, with fac-similes. The volume has become very rare, only a hundred copies having been printed.

Catalogues of the editions of *The Comedy* are to be found in De Batines' fundamental work, Ferrazzi's *Manuale Dantesco*, and in the following: —

Durazzo, G.: *Catalogo delle Edizioni della Divina Commedia esistenti nella Biblioteca di Rovigo.* Rovigo, 1865.

Fapanni, F. S.: *Prospetto Sinottico delle Edizioni della Divina Commedia.* Venice, 1864.

*Esposizione Dantesca in Firenze.* Maggio, MDCCLXV, pp. 1-70, II.

Narducci, E.: *Nota delle Edizioni della Divina Commedia, esistenti nelle principali Biblioteche di Roma.* Rome, 1867.

Petzholdt, Julius: *Catalogus Bibliothecae Dantecae Dresdensis.* Leipzig, 1822, pp. 36-46.

From 1472 to 1500, there appeared fifteen editions of the poem; from 1501 to 1600, thirty; from 1601 to 1700, three; and from 1801 to 1882, two hundred and fifty-seven, making in all 336 known editions, no account being taken of those whose existence is doubtful.<sup>1</sup> The largest edition, as regards size, is

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[<sup>1</sup> Several editions have appeared since, among them a very handy, cheap, and beautifully printed diamond edition by Biagi. Florence, Sansoni, 1883.]

that of Mussi, Milan, 1809, imperial fol.; length, 22.43 in., width, 14.96 in. The smallest edition, both in size and printing, is that of Hoepli, Milan, 1878, 128vo, length; 2.165 in., width, 1.378 in., five sheets and five hundred pages. One of the best editions for students is the *Paduan* of 1822, in five vols., 8vo. More convenient is the reprint of it by Passigli, Florence & Prato, 1847-50; one thick vol., large 8vo, with double columns. To beginners may be recommended the editions (several times reprinted) of Brunone Bianchi (Florence, Le Monnier), of Fraticelli (Florence, Barbèra), and of Andreoli (Naples, National Printing-office, and Florence, Barbèra). A beautiful and accurate pocket edition is Barbèra's diamond edition; more elegant, but rare, is Pickering's diamond edition (London, 1823), up to 1878 the smallest edition published.

Among the numerous *éditions de luxe*, we may mention that of Zatta (Venice, 1757-58; 5 vols., 4to); the *Bodoniana*, edited by Dionisi (Parma, 1795; 3 vols., royal fol.); the *Florentine*, edited by Ancora (1817-19; 4 vols., large fol.), etc. The most splendid, but dearest and rarest edition, containing, however, only the *Hell*, is that of Lord Vernon (London, 1858-65; 3 vols., very large 4to), regarding which, see Ferrazzi, *Manuale Dantesco*, IV, 329-332, [and K. Witte, *Dante Forschungen*, Vol. II, pp. 467-82].

For a long time, the admirers of Dante, foreigners as well as Italians, have desired to see published a really national edition of *The Comedy*, answering the demands of modern science, and in all respects worthy of the Poet and of Italy.

§ 3. COMMENTARIES. — The labor of commenting on *The Divine Comedy* began almost as soon as the poem was published, while Dante was hardly cold in his grave, and has continued till the present day. Such,



and so numerous, are the theological and philosophical profundities, the philological and astronomical difficulties, and the historical allusions in *The Divine Comedy*, that the labor is still far from being finished, and there are still very many enigmas to solve. The most important commentaries are those of the fourteenth century, such as that of Jacopo della Lana (*il Laneo*), the so-called *Ottimo* (best), those of the Anonymous Florentine, of Pietro di Dante, Boccaccio, Benvenuto Rimbaldi da Imola, and Francesco da Buti. In the fifteenth century, Guiniforto delli Bargigi wrote a commentary on the *Hell*, and Cristoforo Landino wrote one on the whole *Comedy*. The latter acquired great, and, in part, well-deserved renown. To the sixteenth century belong the commentaries of Alessandro Vellutello and of Bernardino Daniello of Lucca. The former is little more than an epitome of Vellutello's work; the latter is original and erudite. In the seventeenth century, these studies were much neglected, so that no one cared to interpret the *Sacred Poem*; in the eighteenth, very lengthy commentaries were written by Pompeo Venturi and Francesco Baldassare Lombardi. Since the beginning of the present century, the number of commentators has been very great. The most important are Biagioli, Costa, Cesari, Tommasèo, Brunone Bianchi, Fraticelli, and Andreoli. In Scartazzini's edition, an attempt has been made to collect, within a small space, to examine, and to arrange all the interpretations published from the fourteenth century to the present day.

The most ancient commentary known is that by Jacopo della Lana, of Bologna, written in the vulgar tongue, some time before 1328. It was published in the edition of *The Comedy* by Wendelin of Speyer (Venice, 1477), and in the present century was reprinted at Milan (1 vol., fol., 1865), and at Bologna (3 vols., 8vo, 1866-67).<sup>1</sup> The ancients set great store by this work, and many commentators plundered it, e.g., the author of the *Ottimo* and the Anonymous Florentine. The latter, after making a liberal use of it in the first two parts of *The Comedy*, copies it *verbatim* in the third. Cf. De Batines, *Del Comento sulla Divina Commedia attribuito a Jacopo della Lana e di quello appellato l' Ottimo* (*Bibliografia Dantesca*, Vol. I, pp. 582-618).

Catalogues of the published commentaries are to be found in the bibliographical works of De Batines, Ferrazzi, and Petzholdt (see pp. 14, 15). Here follows a small selection:—

*L' Ottimo Commento della Divina Commedia.* Testo inedito d' un Contemporaneo di Dante, citato dagli Accademici della Crusca. Edited by A. Torri, Pisa, 1827-29, 3 vols., 8vo.

*Comento alla Divina Commedia d' Anonimo Fiorentino del Secolo XIV.* Ora per la prima Volta stampato, a Cura di Pietro Fanfani. Bologna, 1866-74, 3 vols., 8vo.

*Petri Allegherii Super Dantis, ipsius Genitoris, Comoediam Commentarium.* Nunc primum in lucem editum, consilio et sumptibus G. J. Bar. Vernon, curante Vicentio Nannucci. Florence, 1845, large 8vo.

*Il Comento di Giovanni Boccaccio sopra la Commedia.* Con le Annotazioni de A. M. Salvini. Preceduto dalla Vita di Dante Alighieri scritta dal Medesimo. Per Cura di Gaetano Milanesi. Florence, 1863, 3 vols., 12mo.

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[<sup>1</sup> These editions are both almost valueless, being the work of Prof. Luciano Scarabelli, in whom no reliance can be placed. See K. Witte, *Dante-Forschungen*, Vol. II, pp. 406-441.]

*Benvenuto Rambaldi da Imola, illustrato nella Vita e nelle Opere e di lui Comento Latino sulla Divina Commedia.* Vol-tato in Italiano da Giovanni Tamburini. Imola, 1855-58, 3 vols., 8vo.

*Comento di Francesco da Buti sopra la Divina Commedia di Dante Alighieri.* Pubblicato per Cura di Crescentino Gian-nini. Pisa, 1858-62, 3 vols., 8vo.

*Lo Inferno della Commedia di Dante Alighieri, col Comento di Guiniforto delli Bargigi.* Tratto di due Manoscritti inediti del Secolo decimoquinto, con Introduzione e Note di G. Zache-roni. Marseilles, 1838, 8vo.

*Comento di Cristophoro Landini Fiorentino sopra la Co-media di Danthe Alighieri, Poeta Fiorentino.* Florence, 1481, fol. Frequently reprinted; along with Vellutello's commen-tary, in the three editions of Sansovino. Venice, 1564, 1578, 1596, fol.

*La Comedia di Dante Alighieri con la nova Esposizione di Alessandro Vellutello.* Venice, 1544, 4to.

*Dante con l' Esposizione di M. Bernardino Daniello da Lucca, sopra la sua Commedia dell' Inferno, del Purgatorio e del Paradiso.* Nuovamente stampato e posto in luce. Venice, 1568, 4to.

*La Divina Commedia, con una breve e sufficiente Dichiarazione del Senso letterale, diversa in più luoghi da quella degli antichi Comentatori, di Pompeo Venturi.* Verona, 1749, 3 vols., 8vo. Other editions are very numerous.

*La Divina Commedia, novamente corretta, spiegata e difesa da F. B. L. M. C.* (Francesco Baldassare Lombardi, Minor Con-ventuale). Rome, 1791, 3 vols., 4to. The chief reprints of this celebrated work are: Rome, 1815-17, 14 vols., 4to; 1820-23, 3 vols., 8vo; Padua, 1822, 5 vols., 8vo; Florence, 1830-41, 6 vols., 8vo; 1838, 1847-52, 8vo. Lombardi is followed by the two following: —



Portirelli, Luigi: *La Divina Commedia illustrata di Note*. Milan, 1804, 3 vols., 8vo.

Poggiali, Gaetano: *La Divina Commedia già ridotta a miglior Lezione dagli Accademici della Crusca, ed ora accuratamente emendata ed accresciuta di varie Lezioni, etc.* Leghorn, 1807-13, 4 vols., 8vo.

*La Divina Commedia col Commento di Giosafatte Biagioli*. Paris, 1818-19, 3 vols., 8vo. Among many reprints of this work, the following deserve mention: (1) that of Silvestri, Milan, 1820-21, 3 vols., 12mo; (2) that edited by Gabriele de Stefano, Naples, 1858, 8vo.

*Bellezze della Divina Commedia. Dialoghi di Antonio Cesari, P. D. O.* Verona, 1824-26, 3 vols., 8vo. Reprinted in Naples, 1827 and 1855; Milan, 1845 and 1855; Parma, 1844; Venice, 1849; etc.

*La Commedia di Dante Alighieri, col Commento di Niccolò Tommasèo*. Venice, 1837, 3 vols., 8vo. Reprinted with the title: *Commedia di Dante Alighieri, con Ragionamenti e Note di Niccolò Tommasèo*. Milan, Reina, 1854, 4to; illustrated edition, 1865, 3 vols., 4to; 1869, 3 vols., 12mo.

*La Commedia di Dante Alighieri Fiorentino nuovamente riveduta nel Testo e dichiarata da Brunone Bianchi*. Florence, Le Monnier, 1854, and often since; last edition, 1868, 12mo. Bianchi first edited some editions of Costa's commentary, with additions and improvements; finally, in 1854, he called the commentary his own. Concise and useful for beginners.

*La Divina Commedia di Dante Alighieri col Comento di Pietro Fraticelli*. Florence, 1852, 1860, 1864, etc. Last edition, Florence, Barbèra, 1879, 12mo [contains the *Rimario della Divina Commedia*, which is useful].

*La Divina Commedia di Dante Alighieri col Comento di Raffaele Andreoli*. Naples, 1856, 1863, 1869, etc., 8vo. Stereotype edition, Florence, Barbèra, 1879, 8vo.

*La Divina Commedia di Dante Alighieri con Note tratte dai migliori Commenti da Eugenio Camerini.* Milan, Sonzogno, with Doré's illustrations, 1868-69 and 1880, fol. Cheap stereotype edition [1 franc], Milan, 1873, 1874, 1875, etc., to 1886, 8vo.

*La Divina Commedia di Dante Alighieri. Riveduta nel Testo e commentata da G. A. Scartazzini.* Leipzig, Brockhaus, 1874-82, 3 vols., 8vo.<sup>1</sup>

§ 4. SPECIAL STUDIES. — Far more numerous than the commentators are those who have undertaken to elucidate particular passages, more or less obscure, of *The Comedy*, or to examine the entire poem, or parts of it, with reference to a particular subject. Since Dante's poem embraces all the science of his age, heaven and earth, time and eternity, all the branches of human sciences have contributed, and do contribute, in turn, to throw light upon the meaning of the whole and of the parts. Some study ancient manuscripts, editions, and commentaries, with the view of restoring the poem to its original form; some search through classic literature and the legends of the Middle Ages, to find the fountains from which Dante drew his lore; some inquire into the meaning of the many symbolic and allegoric personages of the poem; some try to clear up and systematize the theology and philosophy of it; some toil over the historical passages, the allusions, and the

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[<sup>1</sup> This edition, by the author of the present work, is by far the most useful and exhaustive thus far published. A volume of *Prolegomena* is promised, but has not yet appeared. — *Translator.*]

single events ; some devote themselves to the philology of the poem ; some, to the astronomical and legal science contained in it ; in a word, there is not a single human science but is, or is supposed to be, one of the stones used by Dante in the construction of his majestic edifice. In this way, the study of Dante has grown ever wider and deeper, so that a whole lifetime would scarce suffice to make an accurate examination of all that has been written, and still continues to be written, on Dante and his chief poem. The Dictionaries to Dante thus far published are very useful, especially for beginners. But the student who desires to penetrate the depths of *The Comedy* would require a large dictionary, exhibiting, in good order, at least the chief and most important results of the labors of six centuries and of different nations, results which at present have to be sought in hundreds of books and thousands of pamphlets.

It would require a very large volume to contain even the names of the almost innumerable particular and special studies and treatises that have been published on *The Divine Comedy*. There is hardly a terzine that has not given occasion for a pamphlet or a dissertation, while several passages can boast (if boast it be) of a whole literature. Setting aside the immense number of books and pamphlets treating of single passages in the poem, let us give a list of works more or less useful for the study of it as a whole.

#### A. Critical and Literary Studies.

Dionisi, G. G.: *Saggio di Critica sopra Dante*. Verona, 1788, 4to.



Di Cesare, Gius.: *Esame della Divina Commedia diviso in tre Discorsi*. Naples, 1807, 4to.

Scolari, Fil.: *Della piena e giusta Intelligenza della Divina Commedia*. Padua, 1823, 4to.

Foscolo, Ugo: *Discorso sul Testo e sulle Opinioni diverse prevalenti intorno alla Storia e alla Emendazione critica della Commedia di Dante*. London, 1825 and 1842, 8vo; Lugano, 1827, 2 vols., 16mo.

Centofanti, Silv.: *Un Preludio al Corso di Lezioni su Dante Alighieri*. Florence, 1838, 8vo.

Bernardelli, Franc.: *Il Concetto della Divina Commedia di Dante Alighieri*. Naples, 1859, 12mo.

#### B. Originality of the Comedy.

Cancellieri, Fr.: *Osservazioni intorno alla Questione promossa dal Vannozzi, dal Mazzocchi, dal Bottari, e specialmente dall' Abate Giustino di Costanzo sopra l' Originalità della Divina Commedia, appoggiata alla Storia della Visione del Monaco Cassinese Alberico, ora per la prima Volta pubblicata e tradotta dal Latino in Italiano*. Rome, 1814, 12mo.

Villari, Pasquale: *Antiche Leggende e Tradizioni che illustrano la Divina Commedia, precedute da alcune Osservazioni*. Pisa, 1865, 8vo. [The "*Osservazioni*" were republished, with the title, *Dante e la Letteratura Italiana*, in the volume, *Saggi di Storia, di Critica e di Politica*. Florence, 1868, 8vo, pp. 95-164.]

D' Ancona, Alessandro: *I Precursori di Dante*. Florence, 1874, 12mo.

#### C. Allegory of The Divine Comedy.

Marchetti, G.: *Della prima e principale Allegoria del Poema di Dante*. Bologna, 1819, 4vo.

Perez, Fr.: *Sulla prima Allegoria e sullo Scopo della Divina Commedia*. Palermo, 1836, 8vo.

Ponta, M. G. : *Nuovo Esperimento sulla principale Allegoria della Divina Commedia di Dante*. Rome, 1843, 8vo.

Barelli, Vinc. : *L' Allegoria della Divina Commedia esposta*. Florence, 1864, 12mo.

Scolari, Fil. : *Il vero e unico Intento della Divina Commedia, considerata nel più concreto suo Ordinamento finale*. Venice, 1864, 8vo.

Graziani, G. : *Interpretazione dell' Allegoria della Divina Commedia*. Bologna, 1871, 8vo.

Pasquini, Pier Vincenzo : *La principale Allegoria della Divina Commedia, secondo la Ragione poetica e secondo i Canoni posti da Dante*. Milan, 1875, 8vo.

On single symbolic personages of *The Comedy*, we have an immense number of books, pamphlets, dissertations, which cannot be named here, simply because one does not know where to begin or end. The student must consult the Dante Bibliographies.

#### D. Religion and Theology.

Zinelli, F. M. : *Intorno allo Spirito religioso di Dante Alighieri desunto dalle Opere di lui*. Venice, 1839, 2 vols., 16mo.

Lyell, Charles : *The Anti-Papal Spirit of Dante*. London, 1844.

Fischer, Anton : *Die Theologie der Divina Commedia des Dante Alighieri aus ihr selbst systematisch zusammengestellt und beleuchtet*. Munich, 1857, 8vo.

Hettinger, Fr. : *Die Theologie der Göttlichen Komödie des Dante Alighieri in ihren Grundzügen dargestellt*. Cologne, 1879, 8vo.

#### E. Philosophy.

Ozanam, A. F. : *Dante et la Philosophie catholique au XIII<sup>ième</sup> Siecle*. Paris, 1839 and 1845, 8vo.

Azzolino Pompeo : *Introduzione alla Storia della Filosofia*

*Italiana ai Tempi di Dante per la Intelligenza dei Concetti filosofici della Divina Commedia.* Bastia, 1839, 8vo.

Simonetti, Onofrio : *Filosofia di Dante contenuta nella Divina Commedia, esposta ed ordinata in Modo scientifico.* Napoli, 1845, 8vo.

Genovesi, Vinc. : *Filosofia della Divina Commedia.* Florence, 1876, 8vo.

[Delff, H. K. Hugo : *Dante Alighieri und die Göttliche Komödie. Eine Studie zur Geschichte der Philosophie und zur Philosophie der Geschichte.* Leipzig, 1869, 12mo.]

#### F. Astronomy.

Ponta, M. G. : *Orologio di Dante Alighieri.* Rome, 1843, 8vo.

Antonelli, G. : *Studi particolari sulla Divina Commedia.* Florence, 1871, 8vo.

Della Valle, G. : *Il Senso geografico-astronomico dei Luoghi della Divina Commedia.* Faenza, 1869. Supplement, Faenza, 1870, 8vo.

Della Valle, G. : *Nuove Illustrazioni sulla Divina Commedia, divise in tre Parti. Ad Uso delle Scuole.* Faenza, 1877, 8vo.

#### G. Politics.

Ruggeri, Aug. : *Concetto Politico di Dante Alighieri.* Pesaro, 1865, 8vo.

Delogù, Salv. : *Della Politica di Dante.* Florence, 1865, 12mo.

Cittadella, G. : *L' Italia di Dante.* Padua, 1865, 8vo.

Marengi, Carlo : *Dante Politico.* Bergamo, 1865, 8vo.

D' Ancona, Alessandro : *Il Concetto della Unità politica nei Poeti Italiani.* Pisa, 1876, 12mo.

Bernardelli, F. : *Il Dominio Temporale dei Papi nel Concetto politico di Dante Alighieri.* Modena, 1881, 16mo.



Ortolan, I.: *Les Pénalités de l'Enfer de Dante*. Paris, 1873, 8vo.

(See also Pt. II, Chap. III, § 3.)

#### H. Dictionaries.

Volpi, G.: *Indici richissimi della Divina Commedia, che spiegano tutte le Cose difficili di esso Poema e tengono la Vece d' un intero Comento*. Padua, 1727, 8vo. (Reprinted in many editions of *The Comedy*.)

Blanc, L. G.: *Vocabolario Dantesco, ou Dictionnaire critique et raisonné de la Divine Comédie de Dante Alighieri*. Leipzig, 1852, 8vo. (Italian translation by G. Carbone, Florence, 1859, 12mo.)

Castrogiovanni, F.: *Fraseologia Poetica e Dizionario Generale della Divina Commedia*. Palermo, 1854, 4to.

Bocci, Donato: *Dizionario Storico, Geografico, Universale della Divina Commedia di Dante Alighieri, contenente la Biografia dei Personaggi, la Notizia dei Paesi e la Spiegazione delle Cose più difficili del Sacro Poema*. Turin, 1873, 8vo.

Loria, Ces.: *L' Italia nella Divina Commedia*. Mantua, 1868, 4to; second edition, Florence, 1872, 2 vols., 12mo.

Venturi, L.: *Le Similitudini Dantesche, ordinate, illustrate e confrontate*. Florence, 1874, 12mo.

§ 5. ILLUSTRATIONS. — Dante being the most plastic of all poets, the artists of all times, and the most distinguished among them, have sought to represent, through the arts of design, the creations and the lofty fancy of the great Poet. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the manuscripts of *The Comedy* were embellished with superb initials and miniatures. After the invention

of printing, the miniatures were succeeded by copperplate engravings and woodcuts. Many editions were illustrated with these, from the first Florentine edition of 1481, down to the modern *éditions de luxe* with the designs of Gustave Doré. Among the artistic illustrators of Dante, the most distinguished were: in the fifteenth century, Sandro Botticelli;<sup>1</sup> in the sixteenth, the great Michelangelo (whose designs, drawn on the broad margins of the Florentine edition of 1481, were destroyed by a tempest), Federico Zucaro, and Giovanni Strada, called Stradetto. In the sixteenth century Bernardino Poccetti dedicated to Cosimo II, Grand Duke of Tuscany, a pictorial commentary to *The Divine Comedy*. The eighteenth century boasts the first richly illustrated edition; it has 112 copperplate engravings by various artists. In the present century, the most distinguished illustrators of Dante have been the English sculptor, John Flaxman; the Germans, Peter von Cornelius, Karl Vogel von Vogelstein; the Frenchman, Gustave Doré; and the Italians, Luigi Ademolli, Francesco Nenci, Bartolomeo Pinelli, Bonaventura Genelli, and, above all, Francesco Scaramuzza. Others have exerted themselves to represent Dante's cosmography. Chief among these is Michelangelo Caetani, Duke of Sermoneta. Infinite, moreover, is the number of paintings, frescoes, and sculptures of sub-

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[<sup>1</sup> On this painter and his relation to Dante, see an essay by Walter H. Pater, in *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*, London, 1873, pp. 39-51.]

jects taken from *The Comedy*; of drawings, engravings, and illustrations to single scenes or passages of the Poem, of paintings and medals relating to the life of Dante. Thus, perhaps no book but the Bible has been illustrated so often, and by such distinguished artists, as *The Divine Comedy* of Dante Alighieri.

With regard to this subject, see De Batines, *Bibliografia Dantesca*, Vol. I, pp. 295-349; Ferrazzi, *Manuale Dantesco*, Vol. II, pp. 320-411; IV, pp. 168-208; V, pp. 68-107; Petzholdt, *Catalogus Bibliothecæ Dantææ Dresdensis*, pp. 92-100. On MSS. with miniatures and initials, see De Batines, *Bibl. Dante*, Vol. II, pp. 4-227, and *Esposizione Dantesca in Firenze*. Maggio, 1865, pp. 3-109 [cf. pp. 14, 15].

#### Fifteenth Century.

The Florentine edition of 1481 is embellished with 19 engravings, from drawings by Sandro Botticelli. Other editions of *The Comedy*, belonging to this century, with woodcuts are: (1) the Brescian, 1487, fol., with 68 figures; (2) the two Venetian of 1491, with 100 vignettes; (3) the Venetian of 1493, with 3 large and 97 small figures; and (4) the Venetian of 1497, with 100 figures. The figures of all these Venetian editions are identical in subject, with a little difference in details.

#### Sixteenth Century.

Zucaro, Federico: *Dante historiato da F. Z.* L' Anno 1586. A collection of 86 designs in fol., preserved among the cartoons in the Gallery of the Ufizi, in Florence.

Stradano, Giovanni: *Disegni Joannis Stradani sopra l' Inferno e il Paradiso di Dante*. MSS. in fol., in the Laurentian Library, in Florence. (See De Batines, Vol. I, pp. 1-103.)



There are twelve editions belonging to this century, with woodcuts, most of them with 100 vignettes.

#### Seventeenth Century.

Poccetti, Bernardino : *Il Corso della Vita dell' Uomo, ovvero l' Inferno, il Purgatorio e il Paradiso, disegnato da Bernardino Pocetti e inciso da Giacomo Callot.* 4 sheets in large folio. The dedicatory letter to Cosimo II, is dated 20th May, 1612.

#### Eighteenth Century.

Six illustrated editions appeared in this century. The chief among them is that of Zatta, Venice, 1757-78, 3 vols., 4to (two additional volumes contain the *Minor Works*), with 112 large copperplate engravings, and vignettes at the end of almost all the cantos. Gamba, in his *Serie di Testi di Lingua*, 4th edition, Venice, 1839, no. 396, note, says: "A few copies of all the copperplate engravings, 212 in number, were printed separately, on 53 sheets, in order that they might be framed and hung up in cabinets."

Flaxman, John : *Dante Atlas* (100 sheets) [engraved by Tommaso Piroli, and published in Rome, 1793].<sup>1</sup> Milan, 1822, oblong 4to. Flaxman's outlines have been republished several times ; latest edition, Naples, 1859.

#### Nineteenth Century.

Giacomelli, Sofia (Mde. Chomel) : *La Divina Commedia disegnata ed incisa.* Paris, 1813, 4to. A hundred outlines.

Ademollo, L., and Nenci, Fr. : *Illustrazioni della Divina Commedia.* 125 folio copperplate engravings, in the so-called Ancora edition of *The Comedy*. Florence, 1817-19, 4 vols., large fol.

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[<sup>1</sup> The author, apparently not knowing any edition earlier than that of Milan (1822), assigns the work to the nineteenth century.]

Machiavelli, G. G.: *Illustrazioni della Divina Commedia*. 101 sheets. In the Bologna edition of *The Divine Comedy*, 1819 and 1826, 4to.

Pinelli, B.: *Invenzioni sul Poema di Dante, di propria Mano incise*. Rome, 1824-26, 3 vols., large fol., with 144 engravings.

Koch, Joseph: His 40 designs, executed in Rome in 1814, are preserved in the Royal Library at Dresden.

Cornelius, Peter von: *Umriss zu Dante's Paradies. Mit erklärendem Texte, von Dr. Döllinger*. Leipzig, 1830, 4to.

Genelli, B.: *Umriss zu Dante's Göttlicher Komödie*. Munich, 1849; Leipzig, 1867, 36 sheets fol.

Vogel von Vogelstein, C.: *Die Hauptmomente von Göthe's Faust, Dante's Divina Commedia und Virgils Æneis. Bildlich dargestellt und nach ihrem innern Zusammenhang erläutert*. Munich, 1861, large fol. By this artist there are several works bearing on *The Divine Comedy*. See my work, *Dante in Germania*, Vol. II, sect. I, § v.

Doré, Gustave: His 125 large illustrations have been reproduced in many editions, as well as in translations, French, German, English, Dutch, etc. The original edition is the one several times reprinted by Hachette, Paris, 2 vols., fol.

Scaramuzza, Fr.: *Illustrazioni della Divina Commedia*. Milan, 1874-76, 3 vols., very large fol., with 243 photographs. — *Galleria Dantesca. Trenta Fotografie, tratte dai Disegni di Fr. Scaramuzza, e tre Tavole cromolitografiche ideate dal Duca Caetani di Sermoneta, con Testo illustrativo di Cesare Fenini*. Milan, 1880, 4to.

Caetani, Michelangelo: *La Materia della Divina Commedia di Dante Alighieri, dichiarata in sei Tavole*. Rome, 1865, 1872, 1881, fol.

We can count 37 illustrated editions of *The Divine Comedy* belonging to the present century. Almost all recent ones reproduce Doré's illustrations. There is needed an edition with

all Scaramuzza's illustrations, which are still too little known, though far superior to those of the French artist.<sup>1</sup>

§ 6. MUSIC. — The whole of *The Comedy* being marvellously full of harmony and the truest music, it was natural enough that composers should begin early to set some portions of it to music. There is some reason for believing that the Florentine musician Casella, the contemporary and friend of Dante, set the odes (*canzoni*) of the latter to music.<sup>2</sup> The father of Galileo Galilei, singing tenor, in a clear and intelligible voice, to a viol accurately played, caused the lament of Dante's Count Ugolino to be heard. The Ugolino episode was set to music by Gaetano Donizetti, by the Perugian, Francesco Morlacchi, by Nicolò Zingarelli, and by Angelo di Giulio. The Francesca da Rimini was set to music by G. Rossini, G. Magazzari, Francesco Mazza, etc.; the Pia [*Purg.*, V, 130 sqq.], by F. Marchetti; the Evening [*Purg.*, VIII, 1 sqq.], by R. Schumann; the *Pater Noster* [*Purg.*, IX, 1 sqq.], by A. Biagi. Numerous also are the hymns to Dante, as well the symphonies and lyrics of the Poet, set to music and sung publicly on solemn occasions.

See De Batines, *Bibl. Dant.*, Vol. I, pp. 350 sqq.; Ferrazzi, *Man. Dant.*, Vol. II, pp. 309-19; Vol. IV, pp. 209-12.

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[<sup>1</sup> Among the illustrations to *The Comedy*, few are equal in merit to Mr. G. F. Watts's painting of "Paolo and Francesca" (da Rimini), exhibited in the Grosvenor Gallery in 1882.]

[<sup>2</sup> See *Purg.*, II, 76 sqq.]



Donizetti, G.: *Il Canto XXXIII (l' Ugolino) della Divina Commedia di Dante, posto in Musica*. Naples, 1827.

Morlacchi, Fr.: *Parte del Canto XXXIII dell' Inferno di Dante Alighieri, posta in Musicale Declamazione, con Accompagnamento di Piano-forte*, etc. Milan and Florence, 1834.

Dante's verses, *Hell*, V, XXXIII; *Purg.*, V, VIII, set to music by Rossini, Marchetti, and Schumann, may be found, with the music, in the work of Filippo Mariotti: *Dante e la Statistica delle Lingue*. Florence, 1880, 12mo, pp. 117 sqq.

On Vincenzo Galilei, see Nelli, *Vita e Commercio letterario di Galileo Galilei*. Lausanne, 1793, Vol. I, pp. 9 sqq.

Galvani, in his *Osservazioni sopra la Poesia dei Trovatori*, Modena, 1829, p. 29, affirms that various cantos of Dante were set to music in the course of the sixteenth century by Jusquin, Villaert, and other Flemish composers.

§ 7. TRANSLATIONS.—The Olivetan monk, Matteo Ronto, who died twenty-two years after Dante, translated the whole of *The Comedy*, line for line, into Latin hexameters. In the fifteenth century, Andrea Febrer made a rhymed translation of the whole in the Catalan vernacular, and an anonymous translator left a Provençal version, done, verse for verse, in the metre of the original. Then came the Germans and the English, who, in the second half of the eighteenth century, exerted themselves to turn the *Sacred Poem* into their own languages. In the present century, other civilized nations have imitated their example. At the present day, Dante's *Comedy* is read in nineteen different languages and in six Italian dialects. Several countries, such as France, Germany, and Holland, can boast of a

considerable number of different translators and translations. Germany stands first. She possesses not only a large number of partial translations of single canticles or passages, but also fourteen distinct translations of the entire poem, in thirty-nine editions. Among its translators, Germany counts a crowned king, who not only translated *The Comedy* with unsurpassable skill, but also furnished it with a commentary, which is among the best and most learned that exist. And it is not in Europe only that attention has been directed to Dante's poem. It is translated and read in America, in Asia, and in other parts of the world. If we except the Bible, there is hardly a book in the world that has been translated by so many different persons into so many different languages as Dante's *Divine Comedy*.

Lists, almost complete, of the different translations of *The Comedy* are to be found in the bibliographical works above mentioned: De Batines, *Bibl. Dant.*, Vol. I, pp. 236-279; Ferrazzi, *Man. Dant.*, Vol. II, pp. 498-551; Vol. IV, pp. 428-68; Vol. V, pp. 471-504. For German translations, as well as for all German Dante-literature, we refer the reader, once for all, to our work, *Dante in Germania* (Milan, 1881-3), in the second volume of which will be found registered all that has been written on Dante in Germany, from the fourteenth century to the present day.

#### A. Ancient Languages.

##### 1. Hebrew.

Formiggini: *La Divina Commedia di Dante Alighieri*. Parte Prima, *L' Inferno*. Trieste, 1869, 8vo.

See also the two works by Goldenthal: *Il Dante Ebreo del Rabbi Mosè*. Vienna, 1851, 16mo. *Rieti und Marini, oder Dante und Ovid in hebräischer Umkleidung*. Vienna, 1851, 8vo.

## 2. Latin.

Ronto's translation, above mentioned, is still unedited. Partial translations, edited and unedited, are known to exist in great number. The following versions of the whole *Comedy* deserve mention:—

D' Aquino, Carlo: *La Commedia di Dante Alighieri, trasportata in Verso Latino eroico*. Col Testo Italiano. Naples, 1728, 3 vols., 8vo.

Dalla Piazza, Abbate Vicentino: *Dantis Alighierii Divina Comedia, hexametris Latinis reddita*. Leipzig, 1848, 8vo.

## 3. Provençal.

The ancient translations in this language are still unedited. See De Batines, *Bibl. Dant.*, Vol I, pp. 247 sqq., where several are recorded, with the necessary bibliographical information.

# B. Modern Languages.

## 1. English.

In England<sup>1</sup> [and the United States] there is a large number of translations of *The Comedy*. In 1802 appeared the first trans-

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[<sup>1</sup> The first Englishman known to have studied Dante is Chaucer (1328–1400), who borrowed a good deal from him. In *The Monkes Tale*, we have a summary of the Ugolino episode, borrowed confessedly from “the grete poete of Itaille”; in *The Second Nonnes Tale* (Stanzas VI sqq.) is almost a translation of St. Bernard's prayer (*Parad.*, XXXIII, 1 sqq.); in *The Assembly of Foules* (Stanzas XIX sq.) is an imitation of the opening lines of *Hell*, III and (Stanza XXII) of those of *Parad.*, IV; etc. There are many echoes of Dante in the works of Spenser and Milton. The latter translates a few characteristic lines from *The Comedy* (*Hell*, XIX, 115–17). Speaking of poets, he says: “Above them all I preferred the renowners of Beatrice and Laura, who never write but honor of them to whom they



lation of the entire poem, by Rev. Henry Boyd<sup>1</sup> (London, 3 vols., 8vo). The two best known translations are the following :—

Cary, Henry Francis : *The Vision : or Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise of Dante Alighieri*. London, 1814, 3 vols. (The *Hell* had been published in 1806.) This translation has had more than a score of editions. Among the most recent are the London one of 1877, 12mo, and the New York one of 1880, 16mo.

Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth : *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri*. Boston, 1863, 3 vols., 4to. Of this translation likewise a score of editions have appeared. In Germany and other northern countries, the Leipzig edition is much read (1867, 3 vols., 16mo). Among the most recent editions we may mention that published in London, 1877, 1 vol., 8vo.<sup>2</sup>

The latest translation is that of Tomlinson : *The Inferno of Dante*. London, 1877, 8vo.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. German.

The first translation (prose) of the whole *Comedy* is that of Buchenschwanz, Leipzig, 1767–69, 3 vols., 8vo. The most

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devote their verse, displaying sublime and pure thoughts, without transgression." (*Apology for Smectymnus*. Cf. Letter to Benedetto Buonomattai.)]

[<sup>1</sup> His *Hell* alone had appeared in 1785. That of Rogers in 1782.]

[<sup>2</sup> In America, besides the original 4to edition, there is an 8vo edition in 3 vols., and in 1 vol., and a 12mo edition in 3 vols., all published by Houghton, Mifflin & Co., of Boston.]

[<sup>3</sup> Mr. Lowell (*Dante*, p. 25) says : "There have been eight other complete translations [besides Boyd's], beginning with Cary's in 1814, besides several of the *Inferno* singly. Of these, that of Longfellow is the best." This last remark is most true; and yet there are many passages of theological and philosophic import, especially in the *Paradise*, which are not accurately rendered.

Karl Witte (*Dante Forschungen*, Vol. II, p. 506) says : "The above calculation . . . shows that (apart from translations of at least one of the parts) sixty translations of *The Divine Comedy* into modern languages

popular and wide-spread translations are the three following : (1) that of Karl Streckfuss, with twelve editions ; the last, Leipzig, 1876, 16mo : (2) that of Philalethes (King John of Saxony), with six editions ; the last, Leipzig, 1877, 3 vols., 8vo : (3) that of K. L. Kannegiesser, with five editions ; the last, Leipzig, 1873, 3 vols., 8vo.<sup>1</sup> Remarkable for splendor are the first three editions of Philalethes' translation,<sup>2</sup> and especially the Berlin edition of 1870, with the translation of Wilhelm Krigar and the illustrations of Doré, 3 vols., fol. The cheapest edition is the last of Streckfuss's translation. The most recent translation is that by Karl Bartsch in *terza rima*, Leipzig, 1877, 3 vols., 8vo. On all these and many other translations, see our work, *Dante in Germania*, Vol. II, sect. II.

### 3. French.

France has so many translations, complete and partial, in verse and in prose, that she perhaps rivals Germany. The most ancient printed translation is the versified one of the Abbé

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have been made in the course of the last hundred years. Of these 19 fall to Germany, 18 to England, 16 to France, three to Holland, two to Russia, one to Sweden, and one to Denmark" (written in 1877). In 1820, Byron translated the Francesca da Rimini episode into the rhymed metre of the original. John Carlyle's translation of the *Hell* (New York, 1855) and A. J. Butler's translation of the *Paradise* and *Purgatory* (London, 1880, 1885) are useful. The translation is in prose, and is accompanied with the Italian text and the most necessary notes. Of great excellence is

Parsons, T. W.: *The First Canticle, Inferno, of the Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri*. Boston, 1867. Dr. Parsons has further translated the *Antepurgatorio* (Cantos I-IX of the *Purgatory*), Cambridge, 1875; also Cantos XIII, XVII, XIX-XXII, XXX. All these have appeared in *The Catholic World* (New York) except XXII, which was printed for the Concord Philosophical School, 1886.]

[<sup>1</sup> The fifth edition is corrected and improved ("umgearbeitet") by Karl Witte.]

[<sup>2</sup> This translation is accompanied with an admirable commentary.]

Grangier, Paris, 1597, 3 vols., 12mo. At one time Artaud's translation, Paris, 1811-13, was highly esteemed; now it is almost forgotten. The best-known French translations are the following:—

Fiorentino, Pier Angelo: *La Divine Comédie de Dante Alighieri. Traduction nouvelle accompagnée de notes.* Paris, 1840, 12mo; 11th edition, Paris, 1877, 12mo. *Édition de luxe*, with Doré's illustrations, Paris, 1866 sqq., 2 vols., large fol.

Brizeux, A.: *La Divine Comédie*, in *Œuvres de Dante Alighieri (La Vie Nouvelle)*, by E. I. Delécluze). Paris, 1842, 12mo; last edition, Paris, 1877, 12mo.

Mongis, J. A.: *La Divine Comédie de Dante Alighieri, traduite en Vers Alexandrins.* Paris, 1838 sqq.; third edition, Paris, 1875, 8vo.

Ratisbonne, Louis: *La Divine Comédie de Dante, traduite en vers*, etc. Paris, 1856 sqq.; fourth edition, Paris, 1870, 12mo.

The latest translation is that by E. Littré into old French, Paris, 1879, 8vo (*Hell* only). [Compare his *Étude sur Dante* in his *Histoire de la Langue Française*, Vol. I, pp. 394 sqq.]

#### 4. Dutch.

The translations by J. J. L. ten Kate (Leiden, 1877, fol.) and J. Bohl (Harleem, 1878, 8vo) are not yet complete. The best versions are:—

Hacke van Mijnden, J. C.: *De Komedie van Dante Alighieri. In Dichtmaat overgebracht.* Harleem, 1867-73, 3 vols., fol. Splendid edition, with the original text facing the translation, two large photographs, and 103 pages of illustrations by Doré.

Kok, A. S.: *Dante's Divina Commedia. Metrische Vertaling voorzien van Ophelderingen af Afbeeldingen.* Harleem, 1863-64, 3 vols., 12mo; Amsterdam, 1870, 3 vols., 8vo.

Thoden van Velzen, U. W.: *De Goddelijke Comedie van Dante Alighieri. Met Schets van den Inhoud, Verklaring en Aanteekeningen.* Leeuwarden, 1874-5, 3 vols., 8vo.



5. *Danish.*

Molbech, Chr.: A translation into regular *terzines*, with historic Introduction and short Notes. Copenhagen, 1851-65, 3 vols., 8vo.

6. *Swedish.*

Lovén, Nils: *Dante Alighièri's Gudomliga Komedi*. Lund, 1856-7, 2 vols., 12mo.

7. *Castilian and Catalan.*

Febrer, N' Andreu (XVth Century): *La Comedia de Dant Aligher de Florença. Translatada de Rims vulgars Toscars en Rims vulgars Catalans. Dala à Luz, acompañada de Illustraciones critico-literarias D. Cayetano Vidal y Valenciano*. Barcelona, 1878, 8vo.

Villegas' translation, published in 1515, was republished at Madrid in 1867, fol., with 35 illustrations after Scaramuzza's designs. Sanjuan's prose translation (Madrid, 1868, 8vo) is of little value.

8. *Portuguese.*

In the language of Camoëns there does not yet exist a translation of the entire *Comedy*; but several portions of it have been rendered. We name only two:—

Viale, Antonio José: *O sexto Canto de Iliada e os dous primeiros Cantos do Inferno de Dante, traduzidos das Linguas originaes*. Lisbon, 1854, 4to.

Viale, A. J.: *Traducção do Canto V do Inferno de Dante*. Lisbon, 1857, 8vo.

9. *Modern Greek.*

A translation of the first five cantos of the *Hell*, by P. Vergotinos, appeared at Cephalonia in 1865. It is in the [so-called *χρδαία* or] vulgar dialect, and in unrhymed Alexandrines. A

version of the entire *Comedy*, by Musurus Pascha, appeared in London in 1882.<sup>1</sup>

#### 10. *Russian.*

The earliest Russian version of *The Comedy* was in prose, the work of V. van Dima [Mde. von Kolagrigow]. It contains the original text and Flaxman's outlines. St. Petersburg, 1842-43, 8vo.

We have seen the two following works named ; but, having never seen them, we cannot vouch for them : (1) translation of the *Hell*, by Petrow, St. Petersburg, 1871 ; (2) translation of the whole *Comedy* by Minajew, 1873.<sup>2</sup>

#### 11. *Slavonic.*

There are several attempts at translation published in the literary periodicals of Croatia and Servia. In 1874, it was announced that a translation of the whole *Comedy* by Koseski was about to be published ; but whether it was so, we do not know.

#### 12. *Bohemian.*

Urchlicky, Jaroslav : *Böžská Komedie od Dante Alighieri. Rozměrem Originalu přeložil J. U. Peklo. V Praze Urbánek*, 1879, 8vo, pp. 299 (only the *Hell*).

#### 13. *Polish.*

More than twenty Polish writers are known who have translated *The Divine Comedy*, either in whole or in part. We have before us a translation of the entire poem, we believe the most famous and the most widely read : —

[<sup>1</sup> In Deffner's *Archiv für mittel- und neugriechische Philologie*, Bd. I, Heft. I, Athens, 1880, pp. 239-246, is a version, by G. E. Antoniadès, of the Ugolino episode, in the unrhymed verse of the Klephtic ballads.]

[<sup>2</sup> Karl Witte mentions a translation of the *Hell* into Russian by Dmitri Mein, 1855. See *Dante-Forschungen*, Vol. II, p. 506.]

Stanislawskiego, Ant.: *Dante Alighieri. Boska Komedja* *przekład A. S.* Poznań, 1870, 8vo.

#### 14. *Hungarian.*

Angyal, János: *Alighieri Dante Divina Commediája (Isteni Szinjátéca)*. A Pokol. Olaszból fordította és jegyzetekkel kísérte, A. J. Budapest, 1878, 8vo. Cf. Kerthény: *Dante in der ungarischen Literatur*, 1873.

#### 15. *Roumanian.*

The Transylvanian Densusianu translated Canto XXVI of the *Purgatory* in *terza rima*, and published it in Pestino, on the occasion of Dante's sixth centenary. Ellade Radulesco translated Canto VII of the *Hell*, and published it in the bi-monthly periodical, *Typografical Roman*, Oct. 1, 1870.

#### 16. *Armenian.*

Only two attempts at translation-into this language have hitherto been attempted, but these are highly praised by connoisseurs for their faithfulness and accuracy. These were published in the Armenian review *Polyhistor*, in 1866-67. Separately was published:—

Nazareth, Davide: *Terzine scelte della Divina Commedia di Dante Alighieri. Traduzione Armena, col Testo in Fronte*. Venice, 1875, 16mo, pp. 198. (It was reported that Father Nazareth was engaged on a translation of the whole *Comedy*; but nothing further has, to our knowledge, appeared.)

#### C. *Dialects.*

*The Comedy* has been translated into the Milanese dialect by Porta and by Candiani; into the Veronese, by Gaspari; into the Venetian, by Cappelli; into the Neapolitan, by Jaccarino and Di Lorenzi; and into the Calabrian, by Vincenzo Gallo,



Luigi Gallucci, and Francisco Limarzi. See Ferrazzi, *Man. Dant.*, Vol. II, p. 498; Vol. IV, pp. 428-29; De Batines, *Bibl. Dant.*, Vol. I, p. 236.

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## B. THE MINOR WORKS.

§ 8. EDITIONS. — Any one who wishes fully to understand Dante's chief work must devote much careful study to his other works. This study was long neglected, as if the sun, which is *The Comedy*, had obscured the stars, which are the minor works. With the exception of *The Love-Feast*, which was first printed in 1490, the minor works were not printed till the sixteenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. Although it seemed a very natural thing to make a collection of all these works, yet this was not attempted till toward the middle of the eighteenth century, — by Anton Maria Biscioni, whose edition was never completed. So, likewise, the editions of Zatta, Ciardetti, and Torri remained incomplete. There are at present only two editions comprising the whole of Dante's minor works; the one, several times reprinted, is by the worthy Dantophil Pietro Fraticelli; for the other, just completed, with a diffuse commentary, we are indebted to the High Priest in the temple of Dante — Giambattista Giuliani.

Of the chief editions of the minor works separately we shall have something to say further on, in the different paragraphs of Chap. III. Here we shall speak only of those which embrace either all or most of them.

1. *Biscioni's Edition.*

*Opere di Dante Alighieri, con le Annotazioni del dottore Anton Maria Biscioni, Fiorentino.* Venice, 1741, 2 vols., 8vo. It forms Vols. IV and V of the edition of *The Divine Comedy*, published by Pasquali, 1739-41, reprinted in 1751. Vol. I contains *The Love-Feast*, and the Epistle to Henry VII in Italian; Vol. II, *The New Life*, the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, Latin and Italian, and the Lyrics. Absent are the other Epistles, many of the Lyrics, the *De Monarchia*, the *Eclogues*, and the *Quaestio de Aqua et Terra*.

2. *Zatta's Edition.*

*Prose e Rime liriche editate ed inedite di Dante Alighieri, con copiose ed erudite Aggiunte.* Venice, 1758, 2 vols., 4to. It forms Vol. IV of Zatta's splendid edition of *The Divine Comedy*, and is divided into two parts. Pt. I contains *The New Life*, *The Love-Feast*, the Epistle to Henry VII (translated), the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* (Latin and Italian), the Lyrics, and the Epistle to Can Grande. Pt. II contains *The Seven Penitential Psalms*, *The Creed*, some verses of Dante's, and the *De Monarchia*. Lacking are many epistles and lyric poems, the *Eclogues*, and the *Quaestio de Aqua et Terra*.

3. *Ciardetti's Edition.*

*Le Opere Minori di Dante, etc.* Florence, 1830, 2 vols., 8vo. It forms Vols. IV and V of his reprint of the Paduan edition of *The Divine Comedy*. Vol. IV contains *The Love-Feast* (pp. 433-662), *The New Life* (pp. 663-725), the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* (in Italian only, pp. 727-789), and the Epistle to Henry VII (in Italian only, pp. 791-797). Vol. V contains the Lyrics (pp. 537-704). The bookseller Morini, having purchased this edition, completed it by adding a sixth volume, containing an *Appendice alle Opere Minori*, published in 1841.

4. *Alessandro Torri's Edition.*

*Delle Prose e Poesie liriche di Dante Alighieri. Prima Edizione illustrata con Note di Diversi.* Leghorn, 1843-50, 8vo. Vol. I, *The New Life*; Vol. III, *De Monarchia*; Vol. IV, *De Vulgari Eloquentia*; Vol. V, Epistolary, and *Quaestio de Aqua et Terra*. Vol. II, which was to contain *The Love-Feast*, and Vol. IV, which was to contain the Lyric Poems, the *Eclogues*, and the *Psalms*, were never published.

5. *Fratlicelli's Edition.*

*Opere Minori di Dante Alighieri.* Florence, 1834-40, 3 vols., 8vo. New edit., Florence, Barbèra, 1861-62 [and 1873], 3 vols., 12mo. Best and complete edition, several times reprinted. (The Neapolitan edition of 1855, 1 vol, 8vo, is convenient and cheap.) Vol. I contains the Italian Lyrics, and the Latin Poems; Vol. II, *The New Life*, the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, the *De Monarchia*, and the *Quaestio de Aqua et Terra*; Vol. III, *The Love-Feast* and the Epistles.

6. *Giuliani's Edition.*

*Opere Minori di Dante Alighieri, reintegrate nel Testo e Commentate.* Florence, Le Monnier, 1868-82, 4 vols., 12mo. Good complete edition. Vol. I, *The New Life* and the Lyric Poems (1868); Vol. II (in two pts.), *The Love-Feast*; Vols. III and IV, the Latin Works (1878-82). The commentary somewhat lacks brevity, sobriety, and scientific exactness.

On works illustrative of the minor works, see the different paragraphs of Chap. III.

§ 9. TRANSLATIONS. — The minor works of Dante having been neglected in Italy itself, it was, of course, natural that other nations should pay small attention to them. With slight exceptions, they remained unknown



outside of Italy for five whole centuries. For some time, however, even foreigners have begun to study them, and to endeavor to render them, at least in part, into their respective languages. The first place in this field is occupied by Germany, which alone possesses an almost complete translation of Dante's minor works, while of some of them it has several. Next comes France, which has translations of everything except the Epistles, the *Eclogues*, and the *Quaestio de Aqua et Terra*. The third place is occupied by England, which boasts several translations of *The New Life* and the Lyrics, and one of *The Feast*. Of *The New Life* there are translations also in Hungarian and Spanish. Other nations, thus far, possess only extracts, paraphrases, and attempts at translation of some of the lyric poems.

#### 1. German.

The treatise *De Monarchia* appears to have been the first of Dante's works known in Germany. It was translated outside of Italy for the first time by Basil Johann Heroldt, whose translation appeared at Bâle in 1559 (very rare, small 8vo). An edition, almost complete (lacking only the *Quaestio de Aqua et Terra*), of the minor works in German is that of Kannegiesser and Förster, which forms Vols. XV, XVI, XXIII, XXVI, and XXVII of Brockhaus's *Bibliothek Italienischer Classiker* (Leipzig, 1841-45, small 8vo). Vols. XV and XVI contain the Lyric Poems, translated by Kannegiesser and others, with a learned commentary; Vol. XXIII contains *The New Life*, translated and annotated by Karl Förster; Vols. XXVI and XXVII contain *The Feast*, the *De Monarchia*, the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, and the Epistles, translated by Kannegiesser. Of

*The New Life* and the Lyric Poems there is also a translation, by J. Wege (Leipzig, 1879, 16mo). The Lyric Poems and the *Eclogues* were translated by Karl Krafft (Regensburg, 1859, 16mo). *The New Life* was translated by Fr. Oeynhausén (Vienna, 1824, 8vo) and B. Jacobson (Halle, 1877, 16mo); and the *De Monarchia*, by O. Hubatsch (Berlin, 1872, 8vo).

### 2. *French.*

The Lyrics were translated into French by Zeloni (Paris, 1844, 18mo); by Delécluze (Paris, 1847); by Rhéal (Paris, 1852), and by F. Fertiault (Paris, 1854). Zeloni and Delécluze translated also *The New Life*; and Seb. Rhéal, *The Feast* (Paris, 1852), the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, and the *De Monarchia* (Paris, 1856).

### 3. *English.*

The English have versions of the Lyrics, by Charles Lyell (London, 1835); of *The New Life*, by Joseph Garrow (Florence, 1846), by Charles Eliot Norton (Cambridge, 1859 [Boston, 1867, 4to]), by Theodore Martin (London, 1862, 4to), and by Dante Gabriel Rossetti (London, 1861. New edition, London, 1874 [latest, 1886], 8vo); of *The Feast*, by Charles Lyell (London, 1842), [and of the *De Monarchia*, by F. J. Church, in *Dante: An Essay*. By R. W. Church, London, 1879, 12mo].

### 4. *Hungarian and Spanish.*

*The New Life* has been rendered into Hungarian by F. Császár (Pest, 1854), and into Spanish by "D. M. A." (Barcelona, 1870).

## CHAPTER II.

### THE LIFE IN THE WORKS.

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§ 1. THE HISTORIC AND LITERARY TRILOGY. — The three phases in the development of the spirit, genius, and conception<sup>1</sup> of Dante Alighieri are mirrored in his works, written at different periods of his life. In those of the first period, — that is, in a certain number of the Lyric Poems and in *The New Life*, — we see the man who, not yet having wandered from the true path, has not yet lost his innocence, but walks turned in the right way, led by a most chaste and pure love to love the Highest Good, “beyond which there is naught to aspire to.” Heavenly peace, filial faith, hope, charity, and fair harmony breathe forth everywhere, both in his verse and in his prose. His songs are not only an allegory of simple trust in God, simple filial faith, untempered yet in the fire of doubt and internal struggle, of sure and serene hope, undimmed yet by the painful disappointments of life: they are rather the genuine and most living expression of faith, hope, and charity. Everywhere, even in the simplest and most natural things, and in the little occurrences which others would

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[<sup>1</sup> *Concetto* has no English equivalent. Germans say *Weltanschauung*.]



call casual, the Poet sees the finger of Him who rules and governs all things, the small as well as the great. At this stage, even gloomy death itself is merely a summons from the Lord of the Angels, calling to his glory,<sup>1</sup> a departure to glory truly eternal. At a time when party strife is raging everywhere, and in a divided city, Dante has no enemy ; nay, there burns in his heart a flame of holy charity, which makes him forgive whoever has offended him.<sup>2</sup> The beauty and virtue of her whom he loves is to him a pledge of larger graces. He who has spoken to Beatrice can never come to an evil end, so great is the grace given to her by God.<sup>3</sup>

But the second part of *The New Life* begins to disclose to us another man. We find no longer simple faith, but despairing grief ; no longer sweet peace and harmony, but struggle and internal conflicts both with grief and with temptation. And then we find him devoting himself to the study of human science, which completely absorbs him. And it is not alone philosophy, properly so-called, that attracts him. Being already proud on account of his knowledge, and thinking he now knows the causes of things, he looks down, with a certain superciliousness, upon those who still remain in mere wonderment. While admitting that formerly he saw only the surface of things, he now boasts that he has obtained a better insight into their

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[<sup>1</sup> *New Life*, Chap. XXIX.]

[<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Chap. XI.]

[<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Chap. XIX, Ode I, stanza 3.]

inner nature. And so we all at once find him, in his treatise *De Monarchia*, examining and developing the whole question of the State and its relations to the Church; and, again, in his work *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, exerting himself in behalf of the language of the common people, "who wander, like blind creatures, through the streets, and often mistake the heads of things for their tails."<sup>1</sup> And, looking back and thinking over again what he one day wrote, he is almost ashamed, fearing to be blamed by those who read his amorous ditties.<sup>2</sup> So he seizes his pen to explain them allegorically, and writes *The Love-Feast*, the apotheosis of Philosophy.

In all these works of the second period, we find, not indeed an incredulous and unbelieving man, or a man devoid of faith and charity, but a searcher, involved in doubt and in the struggles that are inseparable from it, a man who pursues truth along the paths pointed out by human reason, having withdrawn himself from the guidance of divine Revelation, and otherwise disposed of himself.<sup>3</sup>

Finally, in *The Comedy*, the Epopœa of Redemption and Faith, we see the man who has searched and found

[<sup>1</sup> Qui tanquam caeci ambulant per plateas, plerumque anteriora posteriora putantes. — *De Vulg. Eloq.*, Chap. I.]

[<sup>2</sup> Temo la infamia di tanta passione avere seguita, quanta concepe chi legge le soprannominate Canzoni in me avere signoreggiato. — *Love-Feast*, I, 2, *ad fin.*]

[<sup>3</sup> Questi sì tolse a me e diessi altrui. — *Purg.*, XXX, 126.]

—found, not by treading in the paths wherein men follow Philosophy, but by turning back and placing himself again on the true path, illuminated by the light of Revelation. At the same time, we see a man who gathers the fruits of his labors, who, with the materials which he has collected, constructs a sumptuous edifice, a lasting monument of unfailing glory. The man who wrote *The Comedy* has fought and won.

As in the life of Dante, so also in his works, we have a trilogy.<sup>1</sup> In the Lyrics of *The New Life*, in the other Lyrics written at the same time, and in the first part of *The New Life*, we find pure, restful love, simplicity, innocence. In the philosophic Lyrics, in the last chapters of *The New Life*, in the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, in *The Feast*, and in some of the Epistles, we find the struggle with doubt, the scientific enthusiasm which sets human knowledge above everything, the philosophic pride which flatters itself that it can see everything with the eyes of reason alone, and which looks down with contempt upon every one who has fallen behind in science. In *The Comedy*, we find peace regained, firmly based upon human science and the illumination that comes from above — faith reaffirmed by science.

No one who carefully reads the whole of Dante's works, beginning with *The New Life* and ending with *The Comedy*,

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[<sup>1</sup> On this "Trilogy," see an admirable essay, *Dante's Trilogie*, in Karl Witte's *Dante-Forschungen*, Vol. I, pp. 141-182.]



can have any doubt about the reality of the trilogy. To one period of inner life belongs *The New Life*; to another, *The Love-Feast*; to a third, *The Comedy*. Even the Epistles to Henry VII and to the Florentines would have been very different, if they had been written in the first, or in the third, period of his life. The *De Monarchia* and *De Vulgari Eloquentia* do not carry so clearly the impress of the period in which they were written. At first sight, one might suppose them to belong, not indeed to the first period, but as readily to the third as to the second. But, if we look more closely at these two works, we shall find in them also, at least in the latter, the man who is still seeking, still fighting, not the man who has conquered. Hence a close psychological study of the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* compels us to assign it to the second period.

Speaking of the good which he found in the dark forest,<sup>1</sup> the Poet alludes to the results of his philosophical studies, which he is very far from condemning absolutely: he condemns these only in so far as they led him astray from the true path, which is the path of faith. In spite of the grave confessions in the last cantos of the *Purgatory*, we must conclude that Dante never went so far as to deny dogma, and erect doubt into a system. We do not find, in any of the works of the second period, the systematic sceptic, still less the man devoid of faith, hope, and charity. On the contrary, we find the man who believes and anxiously seeks the truth; and the sin of which Dante confesses himself guilty, must, in the main, consist in his having loved human science too much, and in having thought that he could arrive at a knowledge of the truth and at happiness by unaided human reason. He did not deny the truth of Revelation; but Revelation was less dear and less agreeable

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[<sup>1</sup> Ma per trattar del ben ch' i' vi trovai  
Dirò dell' alte cose, ch' io v' ho scorte.

— *Hell*, I, 8 sq.]

to him ;<sup>1</sup> so he withdrew himself from it and gave himself to another.<sup>2</sup>

§ 2. A QUESTION OF CHRONOLOGY. — But there is one fact which seems at variance with the beautiful harmony of the two trilogies, the psychological and the literary, and threatens not only to destroy it, but to render very doubtful the psychological trilogy. Since it is very natural that every work should bear the impress of the period in which it was written, *The Comedy* could not have been written till after the death of Henry VII, that is, till the third period in the development of the spirit, genius, and conception of Dante ; otherwise we should come to the absurd result, that the Poet, after having bitterly repented of his intellectual aberrations, resumed his pen, in order to glorify Philosophy, and to erect a monument to his love for her. If, therefore, there is really a trilogy in the history of the Poet's development, we are compelled to assume that *The Love-Feast* was written before the close of the second period of Dante's inner life. Now, he wrote *The Love-Feast* in exile, after having already wandered as a pilgrim over nearly the whole of Italy [*Feast*, II, 3]. And yet he places the vision described in *The Comedy* in the year of the Jubilee, that is, in 1300. Hence,

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[<sup>1</sup> Quando di carne a spirto era salita  
E bellezza e virtù cresciuta m' era,  
Fu' io a lui men cara e men gradita.

— *Purg.*, XXX, 127 sqq.]

[<sup>2</sup> See p. 193, note 3.]

according to *The Comedy*, Dante recognized the dangers of false philosophy as early as the year of the Jubilee, and yet several years afterwards he wrote *The Feast*, in which he celebrates that same Philosophy as the beloved daughter of God and the true happiness of the soul.<sup>1</sup> But the contradiction between the date of the vision and the time when *The Feast* was written, is only apparent, and vanishes when we carefully examine the first two cantos of *The Comedy*, where we have the story of a reawakening, of conflicts with enemies, internal and external, of vain attempts to climb the Delectable Mountain by a way that was not true — a story which, when stripped of its allegoric dress, shows plainly that it cannot have been the story of a day, or even of a year. We conclude, therefore, that the Poet pretends to have had the vision described in *The Comedy* in the year of the Jubilee, probably because in that year his mind received its first strong religious impression; but that this first impression was one of those inspirations that end in nothing,<sup>2</sup> and that it was succeeded by a period of struggle and of vain attempts to rise by a way that was not true — a period poetically described in the beginning of the *Sacred Poem*. Hence, instead of contradiction, we find the most perfect harmony.

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[<sup>1</sup> *Feast*, II, 16; III, 15.]

[<sup>2</sup> *Nè l' impetrare spirazion mi valse,  
Con le quali ed in sogno ed altrimenti  
Lo rivocai: sì poco a lui ne calse.*

— *Purg.*, XXX, 133 sqq.]



That the date of the vision is the year 1300, everybody knows, and there ought to be no doubt with regard to the matter. But, even if we should place it in 1301, as some would have us do, the vision would still be anterior, by some years, to the time when *The Feast* was written. But all persons agree that the date of the vision is fictitious, and that *The Feast* is anterior to *The Comedy*. The whole difficulty consists, then, in discovering why Dante pretended to have had his vision in the year 1300, a question to which we think we have given a satisfactory reply, since it was a most natural thing that the Jubilee should make a strong impression upon Dante's mind.

But, after all, is it true, or even probable, that in the first two cantos of *The Comedy* we have, in allegorical form, Dante's psychological history for several years? Some hold the matter doubtful. This is not the place to offer a proof; but we may linger for a moment on the principal points. In the year of the Jubilee, then, the Poet awakes and finds that he is in a dark wood and has lost the right way. Here we must distinguish between the time when Dante fell asleep, the time which he passed "full of sleep," and the time when he awoke. After he awakes, he travels for a time and arrives at the end of the valley, at the foot of a mountain illuminated by the rays of the sun. After he wakes, therefore, he walks to the end of the valley, then takes a little rest, then makes his first attempt to climb the mountain. And we say "his first attempt," because, since the Poet tells us that he "turned to go back *several times*,"<sup>1</sup> we must infer that he made not only one attempt, but many. The way which he takes is called the way of the wolf,<sup>2</sup> and Virgil observes to him that, to escape from the savage

[<sup>1</sup> Io fui per ritornar più volte vòlto. — I, 36.]

[<sup>2</sup> Che questa bestia per la qual tu gridi.

Non lascia altrui passar per la sua via. — I, 95 sq.]

place, he must take another course.<sup>1</sup> It follows that, at first, he had followed a false way. And be it observed that this happened not before, but after, the awakening; therefore after the year 1300. Now, what was the way by which, after 1300, the Poet imagined he could reach the mountain of light and happiness? The reply is given with perfect clearness in *The Feast*. It was the way of philosophic speculation. *The Love-Feast*, therefore, casts a very clear light upon one most important point of the allegory with which *The Comedy* opens, and plainly shows that this allegory embraces several years of the Poet's life, — a thing which need not seem strange or improbable. It follows, therefore, with perfect evidence, from the first canto of *The Comedy*, that it was written after the period of *The Feast*, and that, after the year 1300, there was a time in Dante's life in which he labored, "by a way that was not true," to reach light and happiness, and that the difficulties supposed to exist in the chronology of Dante's works are purely imaginary.<sup>2</sup> (Cf. *Abhandlungen über Dante Alighieri*, Vol. I, pp. 146-153.)

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[<sup>1</sup> A te convien tenere altro viaggio

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Se vuoi campar d' esto loco selvaggio. — I, 91, 93.]

[<sup>2</sup> A great deal of unnecessary difficulty is caused by the entirely gratuitous supposition that Dante made only one lapse into heathen speculation, whereas it is clear enough that he made several. That *The Comedy* was conceived, and even begun, before Dante's exile, and therefore before the composition of *The Feast*, is evident, not only from the story told by Boccaccio (see below, p. 217), but also from a statement in the last chapter of *The New Life*, that the author was laboring, at the time when that chapter was written, to indite a work in which Beatrice should be treated of worthily (*E di venire a ciò io studio quanto posso, sì com' ella sa veracemente*). That *The Comedy*, which Dante began about 1300, and of which he wrote seven cantos before his exile, would have turned out something very different from the one which, later in life, he actually wrote, we may be quite sure. The reason why he places the vision of *The Comedy* in the

§ 3. DOCUMENTS OF THE YOUTHFUL LOVE. — To the first period of Dante's life belong the Lyric Poems. Some of these he collected and commented on, toward the end of that period, in *The New Life*; others he began to collect and comment on later, in an entirely different fashion, that is, allegorically, in *The Feast*. The earliest of his compositions known to us is the first sonnet in *The New Life*, a sonnet which the Poet, at the age of eighteen, sent to the "faithful of Love," praying them to expound his vision, and to which replies were given by many, conveying different opinions. Having already, at that age, by himself, and without the aid of any other master, "discovered the art of saying words in rhyme," he must have composed things in rhyme before his eighteenth year, and perhaps some of these compositions are to be found among the numerous Lyrics attributed to Dante which we find in ancient texts, and which modern critics consider apocryphal, because unworthy of him.<sup>1</sup> Dante's Lyric Poems were

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year 1300 is very simple, — he had his vision, and began his poem, in that year. How much of the original draft of the first seven cantos he preserved in the later form of them, it is impossible to say. That the events leading to his exile should have cooled the restored religious fervor of the year 1300, is intelligible enough.]

[<sup>1</sup> Among these I should, with little hesitation, place the *Creed* and the translations of the *Penitential Psalms*. That a boy-poet with strong religious tendencies should write such things, is most natural. Milton, the English Dante, translated several psalms at the age of fifteen. It is interesting to observe that, in the *Creed*, the mortal sins are arranged in exactly the same order as in the *Purgatory*. The same arrangement is found in St. Bonaventura's *Speculum Beatae Virginis*, Lect. IV.]



composed at different times, and under different circumstances, during the years of his chaste and pure loves, of which they are the expression. Dante wished to erect a small monument to the lady whom he had loved so deeply. With this view, he collected some of the love-poems which he had written during the life, and on the death, of Beatrice, furnishing them with scholastic divisions and sub-divisions, and with a half-historical, half-mystical account of the origin and progress of his new life of love. Such was the origin of *The New Life*, which, however, was not completed until the year of the Jubilee, when the author had already entered the third phase in the development of his spirit, his genius, and his conception.

The whole of Dante's lyric poems were not written in the first period. Some of them belong to the second; whereas, in the third, the Poet seems to have concentrated himself upon *The Comedy*.<sup>1</sup> We know, from his own testimony, that even the poems which he undertook to interpret philosophically, that is, by attributing to them a purely allegorical meaning, were written by him in the first period. He says: "And I, therefore, -- who do not sit at the blessed board, but, having fled from the pasture of the vulgar, at the feet of those who sit thereat, gather up of that which falls from them, and know the wretched life of those whom I have left behind me, from the

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[<sup>1</sup> This is very nearly true; still the *Eclogues*, which may count as lyric poems, and at least one sonnet (*Lo sonetto che merta i suoi servi a ristoro*, No. XLIV in Fraticelli's edition. Cf. Rossetti, *Dante and his Circle*, p. 240) must have been written in the third period. I should also place in it the sonnet, *Parole mie che per lo mondo siete* (XXXIV in Fraticelli).]

sweetness of that which I gather crumb by crumb — being moved to pity, without forgetting myself, have for the wretched reserved something, which I already, some time since, exhibited to their eyes, and thereby I have made them more eager of will. Wherefore, now, wishing to prepare for them, I intend to make a general feast of that which I have exhibited to them and of that bread which is necessary for such meat, without which it could not be eaten by them at this feast." (*Feast*, I, 1.) Here, therefore, in speaking of his philosophic poems, Dante tells us that he had not only written, but even published, them a long time before, whence we must infer that he had written them, in great part at least, in his first period. To fix the exact date at which each ode, each sonnet, or other literary composition, was written, is no longer possible.

We may here note a peculiarity of all Dante's works. With the exception perhaps of the *De Monarchia*, they were not written consecutively, but in parts, at different times. The poems of *The New Life* are prior to the prose, and belong to different times; in *The Feast*, the prose is later than the poetry, etc. We see that Dante slowly collected, so to speak, the stones which he afterwards used in the construction of his literary monuments. This fact, too little taken into account hitherto, is of the greatest importance in helping us to fix the date at which *The Comedy* was written (see § 8 of this chapter).

In regard to the time when *The New Life* was written, we have the following dates: (1) Dante tells us that he wrote it at the entrance of his youth (*Feast*, I, 1). Youth begins at the twenty-fifth year of life (*Feast*, IV, 24). Dante, born in 1265, was at the entrance of his youth in 1290. Now, since Beatrice died on the 9th June, 1290, and *The New Life* was written afterwards, we have Dante's own evidence that he wrote the golden booklet about the year 1291. (2) Giovanni Villani tells us that Dante, "in his youth, composed a book on

*The New Life of Love*," and Boccaccio, with more detail, tells us: "In the first place, while his tears for the death of Beatrice still flowed, about his twenty-sixth year, he put together, in a small volume, which he called *The New Life*, certain little compositions, such as sonnets and odes, previously written by him at different times — wonderfully beautiful; and over each separately, and in order, he wrote the occasions which had moved him to make them, and placed after them the divisions of the preceding works." Dante was "almost in his twenty-sixth year" in the first months of 1291. The date given by Boccaccio accords, therefore, perfectly with that given by the Poet himself. (3) But the closing chapters of *The New Life* record later events. Chapter XXXV alludes to an event which happened on the 9th June, 1291; the following chapters speak of events that happened some time later. In Chapter XLI, allusion is made to the pilgrimage of the great Jubilee of the year 1300, and the last chapter speaks of the Poet's marvellous vision, which is perhaps the same as that which gave rise to *The Comedy*, and which took place in 1300. If, therefore, we do not wish to contradict Dante, who positively affirms that he wrote the book about the year 1291, and if, on the other hand, we cannot deny that the last chapters were written later, we must conclude that *The New Life* was really written in 1291, but that, later, the Poet added the last chapters, perhaps removing at the same time the original conclusion. Some think that those chapters were added about 1300. But, if the last chapter really alludes to the vision described in *The Comedy*, the last edition may have even been somewhat later. Some, however, suppose that, in Chapter XLI, the allusion is not to the year of the Jubilee, but to Holy Week in some indeterminate year, and that *The New Life* was completed some years before 1300.

See D' Ancona, Alessandro: *La Vita Nuova di Dante Alighieri riscontrata su Codici e Stampe*, etc., Pisa, 1872, 4to, pp. xv, xvi, and Carducci's remarks, pp. 122, 123.



§ 4. THE TWO PERIODS OF TRANSITION. — Not in an instant, but little by little, a man changes his ideas, his conceptions, his direction, whether in politics, philosophy, morals, or religion. Hence, in the psychological history of the individual, we do not speak of change (since only a man without character suddenly changes his direction on a given occasion), but of unfolding or development. Dante even did not pass at one step from simple faith to doubt born of philosophical speculation, but gradually and almost without knowing how. Neither was his transition sudden from doubt to enlightened faith. It, too, was gradual, full of struggles and internal conflicts. We find, therefore, in Dante's life two periods of transition of some length, and these periods, if real, and not imaginary, will be reflected in his works. And so, in the last chapters of *The New Life*, we find the beginning of the gradual transition to a new intellectual direction. Again, in the philosophical love-poems, in those passages where the Poet complains so bitterly of the hardness and harshness of that Lady of his, whom in *The Feast* he solemnly declares to be Philosophy, we find a reflection of those struggles which always accompany a period of transition.<sup>1</sup> In *The Feast*, the transition is completed. Here, in contrast, and almost in contradiction, with what we find in the philosophic love-songs, the Lady Philosophy is no longer harsh and hard, but so gentle that at all times she begets contentment

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[<sup>1</sup> See especially the ballad *Voi che sapete ragionar d' Amore* (X, Fraticelli, p. 156 sq.) and the third ode in *The Feast*.]

of spirit, "and in her eyes and in her smile, that is, in her demonstrations and in her persuasions, is felt that highest pleasure of beatitude, which is the greatest good in Paradise, a pleasure which cannot exist in anything else here below, save in looking into these eyes and this smile." <sup>1</sup> The second period of transition — transition from doubt to faith, enlightened and affirmed by science — is not reflected so much in what the Poet has left written (*e.g.*, in the first two cantos of *The Comedy*) as in the works which he began and left unfinished. The fact that he did so leave them can be explained satisfactorily only by admitting the other fact, that, during this interval, Dante's mind, his spirit, his genius, and his conception took a new direction.

*The New Life* closes with the Poet's resolution to speak no more of Beatrice, until such time as he can speak worthily of her, and with the promise to say of her, after some years of preparation through assiduous study, what was never said of woman. The years pass, and we find Dante writing, in *The Feast*, the apotheosis, not of Beatrice, but of Philosophy. In the interval, therefore, he has passed through a transition from the one allegiance to the other. We take no account here of the treatise *De Monarchia*, because there is dispute about the time at which it was written. If, as some think, the treatise was written in the last years of the thirteenth century, it, too, would have to be reckoned among the works written during the first transition period. But this period is so clearly reflected in the philosophical love-poems, that we have no need to go in quest of other documents.

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[<sup>1</sup> *Feast*, III, 15.]

The treatise *De Vulgari Eloquentia* was meant to consist of four or five books. Of these we have only two, and the second appears to have been left unfinished. *The Feast* was meant to consist of fifteen<sup>1</sup> treatises, of which the author completed only four. Why were these works broken off? Boccaccio says that Dante did not complete the first, because death overtook him before he could do so. But we shall see in another paragraph that both are anterior to 1313. Boccaccio is nearer the truth when he speaks of *The Feast*, telling us that Dante broke it off, "either because he changed his purpose, or from lack of time." In a space of at least eight years, he certainly could not have lacked time; the cause must, therefore, be that he changed his purpose or direction.

Boccaccio tells us that Dante in his riper years was very much ashamed "of having made this booklet," that is, *The New Life*. Is this a mere guess, a mere fancy of Boccaccio's? Perhaps the story may have some foundation. It is not impossible that Dante may have been ashamed of *The New Life* at that period when he had withdrawn himself from Beatrice and given himself to another, turning his steps to a way that was not true. Perhaps, also, at a still riper age, that is, in the third period of his life, Dante, no longer "ashamed" of *The New Life*,<sup>2</sup> "was ashamed" of *The Feast* instead. This is a matter of which we know nothing. What we do know is, that, in *The Comedy*, Dante retracted several things which he had asserted in *The Feast*, and that he was very solicitous to show that he had repented of some errors which he had set down

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[<sup>1</sup> Mr. Lowell (*Dante*, p. 31) mistakenly says *fourteen*. Possibly he did not mean to count the introductory book as a treatise; but, in that case, we have now only *three* treatises, not four, as he says.]

[<sup>2</sup> Questi fu tal *nella sua vita nuova*

Virtualmente, ch' ogni abito destro

Fatto avrebbe in lui mirabil prova. — *Purg.*, XXX, 115 sqq.]



and defended in that work. Compare *Feast*, II, 14 with *Parad.*, II, 46-148, and XXII, 139-41; *Feast*, II, 6, with *Parad.*, VIII, 34 sqq.; *Feast*, II, 6, with *Parad.*, XXVIII, 97-135; *Feast*, II, 15, with *Hell*, XVII, 108 sqq., and *Parad.*, XIV, 97 sqq., etc.

§ 5. DOCUMENTS OF THE SECOND LOVE. — To the second, that is, the philosophical, period of Dante's life, belong, besides some philosophic poems, the two unfinished works *De Vulgari Eloquentia* and *The Love-Feast*. In both is exhibited the philosopher, intoxicated with the love of science, which he holds to be man's highest good, and seeking, by diffusing it, to acquire fame for himself and, at the same time, to further man's well-being and happiness. These two works were written during Dante's exile and before the arrival of Henry VII in Italy — the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* between 1305 and 1308; *The Feast*, about 1308-10. They were not written continuously, but with interruptions more or less long — probably involuntary, due to the restless and wandering life of the exile, who was forced to trudge from place to place, a pilgrim and almost a beggar. *The Feast* was composed, bit by bit, at different times, and not in the chronological order in which it was published, the first treatise having been written after the other three. Some chapters were probably outlined even before his banishment.

With regard to the date of the treatise *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, all critics are essentially agreed. No account need be taken of

the opinion that the work was written at Ravenna in the last years of Dante's life. From the work itself we obtain the following dates: (1) It was written during Dante's exile. In Book I, chap. VI, we read: "But we, who have the world for our country, as fishes have the sea, although we drank the water of the Arno before we had teeth, and though we love Florence so much that, for having loved her, we suffer unjust exile, nevertheless lean the shoulders of our judgment against reason, rather than against sense." In Book I, chap. XVII, we read: "What glory it (the vulgar tongue) confers upon its familiars, we ourselves have known, who, for the sweetness of this glory, place our exile behind our backs." (2) It was written before 1310. In Book I, chap. XVIII, occurs this passage: "The reason why we call the vulgar idiom *aulic* (courtly) is this: if we Italians had a court (*aula*), this idiom would be the idiom of the palace. . . . Hence our *illustrious* (idiom) goes wandering like a stranger, and is entertained in humble retreats, because we have no court. . . . For, though there is no court in Italy (in the sense of a sole court, like that of the King of Germany), yet its members are not wanting; and, as the members of the German court are united by one Prince, so the members of the Italian court are united by the gracious light of reason. Wherefore it would be wrong to say that we Italians lack a court, because we lack a Prince; since we have a court, although it is corporally divided." Dante would not have written this after Henry VII had started for Italy. (3) The second book was begun some time after the termination of the first. In Book II, chap. I, we read: "Promising once more the diligence of our powers, and returning to the composition of the useful work." (4) The sixth chapter of the second book was written before the death of Azzo VIII of Este, which took place on the 31st January, 1308. In that chapter we read: "The laudable discretion of the Marquis of Este, and his munificence,

ready for all, causes him to be beloved.”<sup>1</sup> Hence the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* was written between 1305 and 1308.

Some critics cite a passage in Book I, chap. VI, to show that that work was written between 1305 and 1306. Here are Dante’s words: “What now does the trumpet of the last Frederic sound? What the bell of the second Charles? What the horns of the mighty Marquises John and Azzo? What the flutes of other magnates?” It does not seem to us that we can infer from these words that, when Dante wrote, John I of Monferrato, Azzo VIII of Este, and Charles II of Naples were still living; because, if so, we should also have to draw the same inference with regard to Frederic II.

The passage in *The Feast*, I, 3, “Of this I shall speak more fully elsewhere, in a book which I intend, by God’s leave, to make, on *Vulgar Eloquence*,” might have been written even after Dante had finished the first, and part of the second book of a work which was intended to have four or, according to some, five books. See

Fratlicelli, P.: *Opere Minori*, Vol. II, pp. 136 sqq.

Böhmer, Ed.: *Ueber Dante’s Schrift, De Vulgari Eloquentia*. Halle, 1867, 8vo.

Giuliani, G. B.: *Opere Latine di Dante Alighieri*, Vol. I, pp. 126 sqq.<sup>2</sup>

[<sup>1</sup> The argument, that this proposition is introduced merely as an example of style, and, therefore, does not imply that the Marquis is still living, has no force, because in other examples Dante puts the verb in the present tense.]

[<sup>2</sup> This attempt to fix the date of the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* between 1305 and 1308 seems to me a failure, and something calculated to distort the history of Dante’s mental development. Boccaccio tells us, in the most explicit terms, that Dante, “near the time of his death composed a little book in Latin prose, which he entitled *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, and in which he intended to give instruction to whoever wished to learn, in the art of saying words in rhyme.” We have also Dante’s own explicit asser-



The date at which *The Feast* was written has been the subject of many studies and questionings. But, in this case we have Dante's own positive testimony, and this is worth much

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tion that it was written after *The Feast*, and this cannot be explained away in any such way as our author attempts. Moreover, the proofs adduced to invalidate the evidence of Dante and of Boccaccio are of no force whatsoever. They were first collected by Fraticelli, a very poor critic, and almost slavishly copied by every one who has touched the subject after him. Our author's exhibit is only an uncritical *résumé* of pp. 136, 137 of Fraticelli's *Dissertation*, and the same is admittedly true of that of Giuliani. The proofs offered by Fraticelli to show that the work was written before 1308 are two: (1) that Dante would not have spoken of Italy as having no court after 1309, when Henry VII was on his way to Italy; (2) that Azzo VIII of Este, who died in January, 1308, is spoken of as still living. Now, granting even that Henry VII might have formed in Italy a court in Dante's sense, he certainly could not have done so before 1312, the date of his coronation at Rome, and, therefore, up to that time, Italy was without a court. Again, after the death of Henry VII, the Italians were without a court; so that what Dante says on the subject would have been true any time during his stay at Ravenna. With regard to the second proof: in the passage quoted by Fraticelli and his followers (Book II, chap. VI), no mention is made of Azzo VIII, but only of Azzo; and the passage itself, despite our author's assertion, *is* quoted as a mere example of style. But though we should admit that, even in an example of style, Dante would not have used the present tense, if the subject of his proposition had not been alive at the time, are we sure that Dante did use the present tense? Is *fecit* so unlike *facit* that a copyist might not write the latter for the former? And is an important date to be decided, contrary to very strong authority, by a single letter in an old manuscript? Surely no weaker evidence is conceivable. Again, if the Azzo referred to be Azzo VIII, and he be the same mentioned in Book I, chap. XII, along with Frederic II, Charles II, etc., we are certainly justified in inferring that he was dead when Dante wrote. But there is another proof, I believe, never adduced hitherto, to show the date of the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*. In his first *Eclogue*, Dante tells Giovanni del Virgilio (Mopsus) of a conversation carried on between himself (Tityrus) and Melibæus (Dino Pierini?), in regard to a proposal made by Mopsus that Tityrus should give up the use of the vulgar tongue, write heroic poems in Latin, and then come to Bologna to be crowned. Tityrus con-

more than all the hypotheses of modern critics put together. In the first chapter of the first treatise, he tells us that he is writing after the close of his youth. Now, according to Dante,

cludes that he will put off the crowning until he has finished his *Purgatory* and his *Paradise*, and then accept, "if Mopsus will permit." "Why shouldn't he permit?" asks Melibœus. "Don't you see," says Tityrus, "that he objects to the language of my *Comedy*, first, because it sounds as if it came from women's lips, and, second, because the Castalian sisters are ashamed to own it?" (and he reads over Mopsus' verses). Melibœus shrugs his shoulders, and asks: "What then shall we do, in order to reconcile Mopsus?" Tityrus replies: "I have with me, as you know, a very favorite ewe, which scare can carry her udders, so abundant is her milk (she is just now ruminating the grass she has been cropping, under a big rock). Connected with no flock, accustomed to no fold, she is wont to come of her own accord, never unwillingly, to seek the milk-pail. Her I am waiting with ready hands to milk. With this [milk] I shall fill ten vessels and send them to Mopsus."

That the ewe here spoken of is the plan of some work, is evident enough. Critics have generally assumed it to be that of *The Comedy*; but this I believe to be a mistake, for two reasons: (1) because *The Comedy* is spoken of a few lines before, and therefore would not have to be introduced as something new, as the "ewe" is; (2) because sending Mopsus ten more cantos of *The Comedy*, after he had seen the whole of the *Hell* and at least twenty-two cantos of the *Purgatory*, would not be likely to reconcile him. If, on the contrary, we suppose the ewe to mean the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, the whole passage becomes clear and full of meaning. Giovanni del Virgilio had reproved Dante for writing in the vulgar tongue. Dante hoped to reconcile him to this by means of his work *On Vulgar Eloquence*, for which he had collected the materials ("carptas herbas"), and on which he was then ruminating. As it was to be written in prose, and required no inspiration, it could be taken up at any time, not requiring to be driven to the milk-pail. The ten vessels that were to be filled with the milk probably signify that Dante meant to extend the work to ten books, and not merely to four or five, as is generally supposed.

In fine, there is every reason for believing Boccaccio's statement, that the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* was written in the last years of Dante's life, to be entirely correct. And, indeed, Boccaccio had the amplest means of knowing how Dante employed his last years.

youth lasts till the forty-fifth year [*Feast*, IV, 24]. His youth, therefore, was closed in 1310. In agreement with this date is what he says of his exile and his long wanderings through nearly all the parts of Italy. But some passages were plainly written before 1310. In *Treat.* IV, chap. VI, he says: "And I say to you Charles and Frederic, who are kings, and to you other princes and tyrants." But Charles II, of Naples, died on the 5th March, 1309. In *Treat.* IV, chap. III, he says: "Frederic of Suabia, last emperor [and king] of the Romans (I say 'last' with respect to the present time, notwithstanding that Rudolf and Adolf and Albert have since been elected, after his death and that of his descendants)." These words were evidently written before Dante heard the news of Henry VII's coronation, and his subsequent intention of descending into Italy.<sup>1</sup> If, therefore, we do not wish to charge Dante with falsehood, or, at least, inaccuracy, we must conclude that the commentary to the three odes, that is, treatises II-IV, were written before the first treatise, which is an introduction to the whole work.

Basing their arguments upon certain passages, some critics have tried to show that the second and fourth treatises were composed before Dante's banishment, that is, in the last years of the thirteenth century. If this opinion is erroneous, it certainly did not deserve the neglect with which it has been treated, since some of the observations upon which it is based are entirely correct. But even if, as can scarcely be doubted, some passages were written in the last years of the thirteenth century, are we, therefore, bound to infer that the treatises in

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[<sup>1</sup> It must be remembered that, in the years 1308-10, Dante was in Paris, or at least somewhere in Northern Europe, and that news, especially from Italy, would not reach him for a long time. The words "and king," which I have placed in brackets in the above quotation, are a mere addition of Giuliani's. Henry was made *Roman Emperor* in 1312.]



which these occur were composed at that time? We think not. Rather we may say that the history of the origin of *The Feast* was most probably, nay, almost certainly, this. When, in the last years of the thirteenth century, Dante was entirely devoted to his philosophical studies, he wrote from time to time, according to the custom of those days, glosses to his different philosophic love-songs. These glosses went on increasing, so that, at the end of a few years, Dante found that he had put together a large store of useful and instructive materials. In the years of his exile, going over these glosses, he resolved to arrange the materials which he had collected and to make an organic whole of them. He began, therefore, to write his treatises, giving the work the form of a commentary to his odes, this being the origin of them. As the work progressed, he thought of prefixing to it an introduction, forming the first treatise. At the time of Henry VII's expedition, he was still disposed to continue the work; but it was afterwards broken off, Dante's mind having taken another direction after Henry's death. Such was the origin of *The Love-Feast*. See

Fraticelli, P.: *Opere Minori*, Vol. III, pp. 3-46.

Selmi, Franc.: *Il Convivio, sua Cronologia, Disegno, Intendimento, Attinenze alle altre Opere di Dante*. Dissertazione. Turin, 1865, 8vo.

Giuliani, G. B.: Introduction to *Il Convito*. Florence, 1873, 12mo, pp. iv sqq.

§ 6. A DISPUTED DATE. — Among Dante's works, there is one, the treatise *De Monarchia*, with regard to which sober and careful criticism cannot yet make up its mind to say positively to what period of Dante's life it belongs, still less to assign it to an approximately exact date. The treatise itself does not, like the other

works of the Poet, offer any data with regard to the time at which it was written. Dante, who sometimes speaks of his other works, nowhere either cites or mentions the *De Monarchia*, not even in the fourth treatise of *The Feast*, where it would have been so natural to speak of it, if it had been written before that. Neither Giovanni Villani nor Leonardo Bruni give us any hint as to the time when this work was written. Boccaccio's statement, that it was written at the time when Henry VII came into Italy, seems based upon individual conjecture rather than upon positive information. Among modern critics, some hold that the work was written in the last years of the thirteenth century; some, in 1305 or 1306; some, in the time of Henry VII; and some, in the last years of the Poet's life. For all these diverse opinions, arguments of more or less weight are adduced, while every one is opposed by as many other arguments, some strong, some weak. Although every critic, of course, thinks his own opinion the true one, the fact is, that the enigma is not yet solved.

Even if this were the place to discuss this question, we should abstain from doing so, being forced to confess that we have no definite answer to give to it. Formerly, we held and defended the opinion, that the *De Monarchia* was written in the last years of the thirteenth century. The arguments recently advanced against this hypothesis have compelled us to reconsider this opinion, and to study the treatise over again with the greatest attention, in connection with Dante's other works. The result is, that we can no longer uphold our previous opinion, but

rather incline to assign it to the third period of Dante's life. We do this, not so much on account of the arguments advanced by the critics, as for this reason, that the oftener we read the work, the more we seem to feel in it the impress of a soul that has escaped from the dark wood, and become reconciled with its allegorical Beatrice. But, as we have not yet been able to arrive at any firm conviction on the subject, perhaps because it is so difficult for us mortals to give up an opinion long cherished and maintained, we shall leave the question undecided, referring the reader to the following works : —

Fraticelli, P. : *Opere Minori*, Vol. II, pp. 257-276.

Boehmer, Ed. : *Ueber Dante's Monarchie*. Halle, 1866, 8vo.

Antona-Traversi, Camillo : *Sul Tempo in che fu scritta la Monarchia di Dante Alighieri*. Naples, 1878, 8vo.

Scheffer-Boichorst, Paul : *Aus Dante's Verbannung*, pp. 103-138.

§ 7. DOCUMENTS OF THE THIRD LOVE. — From his youthful years, when his Beatrice was still alive, Dante had conceived the idea of erecting to her a magnificent and sumptuous monument, by singing the three kingdoms,—that of eternal punishment, that of purification, and that of eternal glory. This thought sprang up anew, with fresh force, after Beatrice's death, so that the Poet, in closing *The New Life*, adopted the resolution of dedicating his whole life to the great work, taking care first by study to render himself capable of speaking worthily of his glorified Lady, and then putting his hand to the work. But the vicissitudes of his outer life, as well as the development of his thought, distracted him for several



years. During the last years of his life in Florence, he was absorbed by public and domestic cares. Then came his exile, which, we may well believe, deprived him, for a considerable time, not only of the leisure, but even of the will, to devote himself to literary labors. When, afterwards, his old inclination revived, he devoted himself to works of a different kind, and perhaps thought little of his great work, his heart being entirely occupied with a love very different from that which he had felt for Beatrice. But when, by the death of the Emperor Henry of Luxemburg, he saw his fairest earthly hopes blasted, then, raising his thoughts and mind to heavenly things, Dante left unfinished the other works which he had begun, and gave himself up entirely to the composition of the *Sacred Poem*. This imposing document of Dante's third love—his love for the glorified, symbolic Beatrice—was, therefore, planned and dreamt of even in Dante's youth, although the composition was not begun until after the death of Henry VII, nor finished until the year, perhaps the very month, in which Dante died. In January of the year preceding that in which he died, he sustained, at Verona, the dispute respecting the two elements, water and earth, which he afterwards left written with his own hand. To the last years of his life belong also the two Latin *Eclogues*, written in reply to certain verses addressed to him by Master Giovanni del Virgilio.

In an ode occurring in the nineteenth chapter of *The New Life*, the Poet represents the angels as praying God to make his heaven more beautiful by receiving Beatrice into it, and God, in reply, bidding them have patience, because there is some one on earth who fears to lose her, and who will say to the doomed in Hell that he has seen the hope of the Blest. From these words it is inferred that, as early as the time when that poem was written, Dante had made up his mind to sing the three kingdoms of eternity, notwithstanding that, in the execution of the design, he did not see fit to mention to the evil-born in Hell that he had been privileged to see the hope of the Blest.

Of great importance for the chronology of *The Comedy* is the last chapter of *The New Life*, written, as we have seen, in the year 1300. Dante there writes: "There appeared to me a marvellous vision, in which I saw things which made me resolve to say no more of that Blessed One, until such time as I could discourse more worthily of her. And to this end, I study all I can, as she truly knows.<sup>1</sup> So that, if it shall please Him through whom all things live, that my life persevere yet for some years, I hope to say of her what was never said of any woman." From these words two things follow with perfect clearness: (1) that in 1300 Dante had not begun the *Sacred Poem*, (2) that he did not purpose beginning it at once, but only after some years of study.<sup>2</sup>

[<sup>1</sup> Rossetti, by rendering "she well knows," misses the meaning of *veracemente*, which signifies that Beatrice knows with that true knowledge which is possible only for those who look on God.]

[<sup>2</sup> All that really follows from Dante's words is that he had not written the *Paradise*, and the latter part of the *Purgatory*. There is nothing to show that the poem was not begun, or that Dante meant to study "some years" before beginning it. Our author's foregone conclusion has here misled him a little.]

Some have thought that the *Hell* was finished as early as 1308. The only basis for such a belief is the apocryphal letter of Fra Ilario. But, apart from the fact that the reference to the death of Clement V (*Hell*, XIX, 79 sqq.) shows the *Hell* not to have been completed even in 1314, and apart from other passages in the first Cantic, proving that it could not have been written till after 1310, a simple calculation will suffice to show the untenability of this view. If the *Hell* had been finished in 1308 or even in 1310, it must have been written at the very time at which Dante composed the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* and *The Feast*. Now, to say nothing of the different tendency manifested in these works, it is plain that, in those years of wandering, Dante lacked absolutely both the time and the leisure to write simultaneously three works of such a kind. Everything, on the contrary, goes to confirm the opinion that *The Comedy* was written during the years that intervened between the death of Henry VII and that of Dante.

Boccaccio tells a story to the effect that, when Dante died, the last thirteen cantos of the *Paradise* were missing and could not be found among his manuscripts; and that it was only eight months afterwards that, thanks to a marvellous dream, the cantos were discovered in a hiding-place, in the room "in which Dante was wont to sleep when he lived in this life." In spite of the "marvellous dream," which, after all, is nothing either supernatural or impossible, the story may have, and no doubt has, some foundation in fact. But, even if we regard it as a mere fable, it would still prove that, at the Poet's death, the last cantos of the poem were not published; otherwise the origin of the fable would be something much more marvellous than the story of the dream.

The disputation at Verona took place on the 20th January, 1320. The *Quaestio de Aqua et Terra*, having been written down after this, is, with the exception of some cantos of the



*Paradise*, Dante's last work.<sup>1</sup> The *Eclogues* were written about 1319.<sup>2</sup> See

De Batines, Col. : *Bibliog. Dantesca*, Vol. I, pp. 451 sqq.

Borgognoni, Ad. : *La Genesi della Divina Commedia*. Ravenna, 1872, 16mo.

In order to bring the dates of the *Hell* into agreement with Fra Ilario's letter, Dionisi, who considered that letter authentic, concluded that Dante had made two editions of the first Cantic, and that the second edition, or, as he calls it, the second work, was begun after the death of Henry VII. For those who do not believe in the authenticity of Fra Ilario's letter, this hypothesis is superfluous. Nevertheless, Dionisi's work, *Preparazione Istorica e Critica*, still contains the best things that have ever been written on the time at which Dante wrote the three Canticles (Vol. II, pp. 217 sqq.).

§ 8. THE MATERIALS AND THE EDIFICE. — Seeing that Dante had had the idea of the *Sacred Poem* fixed in his mind from his youthful years, there is no reason for supposing that, when, after the death of Henry VII, he began to write it, he had not yet composed a single verse. Indeed, *The Comedy* is the work of his whole life, planned and begun in his youth, finished in the last years of his life. But, in the history of the origin of this poem, two periods, widely different from each

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[<sup>1</sup> In view of this, it is curious to find Giuliani, "the high priest in the temple of Dante," saying that the *De Monarchia*, from irrefragable and internal arguments must be considered the last work written by the great-soul, Alighieri, almost the seal of his teachings and of his life (Preface to *Opere Latine di Dante Alighieri*, p. iv).]

[<sup>2</sup> If this be certain, then it is equally certain that the *Purgatory* was not finished in 1319. See above, p. 133.]

other, must be distinguished, a period of preparation and a period of composition. The period of preparation, which lasted nearly twenty-five years, that is, from the latter part of Beatrice's life till the death of Henry VII, was devoted, not merely to meditating on the structure of the poem, but in collecting the materials and preparing the stones necessary for the construction of the edifice. Perhaps all the episodes and all the similes in the poem are such stones, collected and prepared, one by one, at different times. It is unquestionable that all the topographical descriptions were written at the places described,<sup>1</sup> and, therefore, at very different times. When, therefore, after the death of Henry VII, Dante began to write *The Comedy*, he had already written hundreds and thousands of *terzines*,<sup>2</sup> which he afterwards incorporated, in their proper places, in the great poem. And, even after having begun to rear the edifice of his poem, with old and new materials, he still continued, profiting by every propitious occasion, to collect additional materials to serve in bringing his structure to its desired completion. And, no doubt, as is always the case in the progress of any work, some of the stones collected were repolished, others were thrown away, as unsuitable for the edifice.

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[<sup>1</sup> This appears to me extremely questionable. If it were true, some extraordinary conclusions would follow in respect to Dante's wanderings.]

[<sup>2</sup> As the whole poem contains only 4,744 *terzines*, this is, of course, an exaggeration.]

Its mere novelty may, perhaps, make this theory seem nothing but a pure hypothesis, having no other foundation than fancy. And yet, if we reflect carefully, we shall find that it is impossible to imagine the works having been composed in any other way. For, surely, no one will be so *naïve* as to suppose that the simile of the man who, having escaped the shipwreck, turns to the perilous water and gazes [*Hell*, I, 22 sqq.], was really the first simile in *The Comedy* written by the poet; that of the miser who regrets the loss he has suffered [*Hell*, I, 55 sqq.], the second, and so on. It must seem to every one more natural to suppose that a large proportion, at least, of the similes in *The Comedy* were collected and versified at different times, and then, during the process of composition, incorporated in the poem as occasion demanded. Thus, no one will suppose that it was only when he reached the fifth canto of the *Hell* that he began, for the first time, to think of putting into verse the sad story of Francesca da Rimini, or that, when he wrote that touching episode, he had not yet made a single line upon Filippo Argenti, or Farinata degli Uberti, or Ser Brunetto, or Guido da Montefeltro, or Count Ugolino, or other personages of the poem. Indeed, it is a matter of course that, if the Poet conceived the idea of the poem in his youth, he cannot have neglected to collect suitable materials, and must have sketched different passages at different times, as opportunity offered, sometimes, perhaps, in prose, sometimes in verse.

But this is not all. Many places are described in *The Comedy* with so much realism and accuracy, that one must be unusually obstinate who does not agree, with Troya and his followers, that the verses describing these must have been written, or at least sketched, on the spot.<sup>1</sup> But, shall we conclude from this that

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[<sup>1</sup> Any one with even a moderate power of "visualizing," will realize at once that this argument has no force whatsoever. See Moore's Preface to *Lalla Rookh*.]



the *Sacred Poem* was merely Dante's Itinerary? Merely because the picture of the cascade of the Montone, above the monastery of St. Benedict [*Hell*, XVI, 94 sqq.], is so perfect, shall we say that, when Dante was in that region, he had just reached the sixteenth canto of the *Hell*? Such an idea would be too *naïve*, and almost ridiculous. No: we shall rather say that these verses were really written, or at least sketched, when Dante was in those regions, for the purpose of being afterwards used in the construction of the poem; and then, when, a long time afterwards, Dante was engaged in the composition of *The Comedy*, he inserted them in it at the proper places, of course polishing them, or even recasting them. It need not be objected that such a view would reduce *The Comedy* to a mere mosaic. What makes a mosaic is not the fact that the necessary materials were collected bit by bit, but the manner in which these materials are used and put into the work. With materials slowly collected through the course of many years, a most beautiful structure may be reared, and this is just what Dante did.

Everybody knows the story told by Boccaccio about the recovery of the first seven cantos of *The Comedy*, said to have been written before the Poet's banishment from Florence. But the story, they say, is a fable. Indeed, at present, there is hardly any one who doubts that these seven cantos were written some years after Dante's banishment. (See *Hell*, VI, 64-72.<sup>1</sup>)

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[<sup>1</sup> And he to me: "They, after long contention,  
 Will come to bloodshed; and the rustic party  
 Will drive the other out, with much offence.  
 Then afterwards behoves it this one fall  
 Within three suns, and rise again the other  
 By force of him who now is on the coast.  
 High will it hold its forehead a long while,  
 Keeping the other under heavy burdens,  
 Howe'er it weeps thereat, and is indignant."

— Longfellow's Translation.]

Is then the pretty story of the recovery of the seven cantos a mere invention? And who was the inventor? Not Boccaccio, for he expresses his doubts? Some one else? But what motive could there have been for inventing such a fable? It is impossible to imagine any, and, in any case, stories generally have some sort of foundation in fact. The recovery might be a fact, and yet there might be some mistake as to the contents of the copy-book (or papers) recovered. That copy-book certainly cannot have contained the first seven cantos of *The Comedy*; but it may have contained, in general, materials, sketches, etc., for the poem planned by Dante. If this was really the case, we can very easily understand the rest of the story, which might contain the truth. Indeed, it is nothing extraordinary or incredible that Dante, believing that he had lost that copy-book, or those papers, should, both on account of this belief, and of the multitudinous distractions that were the result of his banishment, have abandoned the idea of *The Comedy*. Moreover, it is by no means incredible that the recovery of the copy-book may have induced him to resume the magnificent work which he had abandoned. In this way, if we simply admit that the *Sacred Poem* was composed in the way in which conscientious writers are wont to write their books, many difficulties vanish, and a whole bundle of enigmas is solved.

#### § 9. THE HARMONY BETWEEN THE LIFE AND WORKS.

— Only three loves are recounted, or clearly alluded to, in Dante's works; only three in his life. All three, not excluding even the first, although it had a real and sensible object, were supersensual. The ideal love for Beatrice, the mirror on earth of the power, goodness, and kindness of God, was followed by a passionate love

of Science, allegorically represented as a gentle lady, — a love in which the author of *The Comedy* afterwards recognized an aberration from the way of truth. The third and last love was that for the glorified Beatrice, the symbol of the spiritual authority which, according to the dictates of Divine Revelation, guides man to the blessedness of eternal life. The documents of these three loves of Dante's are his works, written in the three periods of his life. All the other sensual and sinful loves, laid to Dante's charge by ancient and modern biographers and interpreters, having no place in his life as mirrored in his different works, but placing the Poet of Rectitude in open contradiction with himself, and making his most solemn protestations mendacious, must be considered fictitious, foolish inventions, having their origin in a misunderstanding of the philosophic love-songs of the Great Poet, and a false interpretation of some passages in the *Sacred Poem*.

Of Dante's three real loves enough has been said. Of the fictitious ones it might seem as if we needed not take any notice. But the charge that Dante was incontinent, and that he sinned much in love, has been repeated so often and by so many persons, and is even repeated by so many at the present day, that the matter cannot be passed over in silence, especially as these loves, if they were admitted, would introduce an ugly disharmony between the life and the works of the Poet.

Boccaccio was not the first person who painted Dante in the brightest hues of luxury.<sup>1</sup> The Certaldese was preceded in

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[<sup>1</sup> Mr. Lowell, therefore, is mistaken when he says: "It was kindly old Boccaccio who, without thinking any harm, first set this nonsense a-going"



this by the earliest commentators of *The Comedy*, some of whom were contemporary with Dante. These accuse Dante, not only of luxury, but also of many other vices, especially of avarice, which is laid to his charge even more than luxury. Now, this Dante, fearfully stained with avarice and other foul vices, is very different from the Dante whom we know from his works. However, it is but too easy to discover the source of these gratuitous charges brought against him by these old writers. In the beginning of *The Comedy*, Dante tells us that, having escaped from the dark forest, and wishing to ascend the "delectable mountain," he was prevented by a panther, a lion, and, above all, a wolf. "The panther," they said, "is the symbol of luxury; the lion, of pride; the wolf, of avarice. Therefore," they concluded, "Dante was luxurious, proud, and, especially, avaricious." Having once established this principle, it was perfectly natural that everywhere in *The Comedy* they should discover confessions of vices, with which the Poet himself was defiled. But these commentators forgot that, according even to their own interpretation, the "dark forest" is the symbol of the sinful life; that, when Dante awakes and issues from the forest, his conversion begins; that it is not in the dark wood, but almost at the beginning of the ascent, that the three wild beasts first appear to him, and that, consequently, they cannot be symbols of the *vices* with which Dante was defiled at the sinful period of his life, but must of necessity be symbols of *obstacles*<sup>1</sup> which, after his awakening, Dante met with on the path of conversion. It follows that, if the three wild beasts really symbolize luxury, pride, and avarice, Dante, far from confessing himself guilty of these vices, declares himself free

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(p. 62, note). It is needless to say that *luxury* here has its mediæval sense. On *Luxuria*, see Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, II-2, quaest. cliij sq.]

[<sup>1</sup> Vices and tendencies to vices are surely the obstacles to spiritual life.]

from them at the very beginning of the poem. They forgot, likewise, that the *Sacred Poem* is altogether universal in its individuality, that Dante is not the particular individual, but *Man*, aided by grace and guided, along the path of contrition and repentance, to reconciliation and happiness.<sup>1</sup> [Cf. p. 282.]

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[<sup>1</sup> All this is a piece of special pleading, without any foundation whatsoever, intended to bolster up a foregone conclusion, falsely supposed to be honorable to the Poet. Absolutely groundless is the assertion that Dante's accusers based their charges upon the opening lines of the *Hell*. There are many passages in the poem upon which they might have based them equally well, and even better (see above, pp. 115 sq.). But there is not the slightest proof that they based them upon anything in any part of Dante's works. Some of them were contemporary with Dante, and seem to have known him well. Hence, there is no reason why they should not have known his habits and reputation; and it is not likely that writers, who esteemed him sufficiently to write commentaries on his great work, would go out of their way to blacken his character without good reason. Again, to try to prove, from the passage concerning the three wild beasts, that Dante, from the beginning of the poem, declares himself free from the vices of luxury, avarice, and pride, is to run in the teeth of facts admitted by all Dante scholars, and even by the author himself. In the first place, Dante met the wild beasts *in the forest*, not after he left it: indeed, he did not leave it till he entered hell-gate. This our author himself plainly and fully admits, in his notes to the first canto of the *Hell*. In the note to line 9, in which Dante, speaking of the forest, says, "I will speak of the other things which I discovered there," the author tells us that, by "the other things," Dante means "the hill, *the three wild beasts*, his own efforts to ascend the mountain, and his sliding back into the low place." Dante, therefore, met the beasts *in the forest*, that is, while still in his sinful condition. In the second place, to make Dante declare himself not guilty of pride, is to place him in direct contradiction with himself, since, in the *Purgatory*, he pleads guilty to this sin in the clearest terms (XIII, 133 sqq.). Our author's argument, therefore, proves too much; that is, nothing at all. Lastly, to say that the Dante of *The Comedy* is not the individual Dante, but *Man* in general, is to say what is ludicrously untrue. *Man* is not born in Florence; *Man* is not exiled from Florence; *Man* is not descended from

It was from the same source, namely, their interpretation of Dante's poems, that Boccaccio and other early biographers derived all that they have to tell us about Dante's love-affairs. From the same source Bastiano da Gubbio drew the declamation with which he was bold enough to disfigure his book *De Teleutologia*, and in which he accused his master of luxury and adulterous connections. They had before them Dante's erotic poems, and they had before them *The Comedy*, which they interpreted in their own fashion; and from these they inferred that Dante was a slave to the passion of love. Any one who doubts this has only to read the commentary of Boccaccio, who (to cite but a single example) infers from the words, "And I

Cacciaguida; *Man* does not first become a Ghibelline, and then form a party by himself, etc., etc. It is, of course, true that much of Dante's experience falls to the lot of many *good* men; but the hero of *The Divine Comedy* is most emphatically Dante, and none but Dante, the peer of Homer, Horace, Ovid, Lucan, and Virgil (see *Hell*, IV, 88 sqq.). I am sorry to revert to this disagreeable subject; but, if we wish to understand Dante's works, which are all, more or less, autobiographical, we must understand and accept the author as he was, and as he loyally and nobly confesses himself to have been,—a man with many grave faults and shortcomings; at the same time, a man who bitterly repented of these faults, finally triumphed gloriously over them, and became a moral hero. No man whose life had not been a long warfare with sin could have written *The Comedy*; indeed, Dante's experiences in Hell and Purgatory would be absolutely meaningless on any other supposition. It surely ought not to lower, but very much to heighten, our respect for Dante, to recognize that the moral pinnacle on which he at last stood was not an inheritance, but a position won, with toil and struggle and bitter warfare, by himself. There is no more moral worth in inherited goodness than there is in inherited wealth, and we know what Dante thought of that (*Feast*, IV). The examples of Goethe and Burns ought to convince us that the power to produce the sweetest and noblest poetry is entirely compatible with, nay, perhaps inseparable from, certain weaknesses in the direction of those sins which in Purgatory are atoned for nearest to the Earthly Paradise.]



who had my heart almost transfixed,"<sup>1</sup> that Dante had compunction on account of being avaricious.<sup>2</sup>

Another consideration shows the utter worthlessness of what some too ingenious writers call the "testimony of the old writers." We know from Dante's works how very jealous he was of his good name, and how much he dreaded lest his erotic poems should give the impression that he was the slave of lust or amorous passion.<sup>3</sup> This being the case, even supposing that Dante was a thrall to sensual love, would not a man of his temper have used every effort to conceal his illicit loves?<sup>4</sup> Or,

[<sup>1</sup> "Ed io, ch' aveva il cor quasi compunto." — *Hell*, VII, 36.]

[<sup>2</sup> Indeed, it is difficult to see for what other reason he should have had his heart transfixed. It must be remembered that he was shown the horrors of hell for the very purpose of having his heart transfixed and his better nature roused.]

[<sup>3</sup> *Feast*, I, 2, *ad fin.*]

[<sup>4</sup> That is, to be a hypocrite. This argument shows a strange misunderstanding of Dante's character. If Dante had any virtue more than another, it was sincerity. We know, too, that he considered hypocrisy a far graver sin than luxury. To have purchased a false reputation for purity at the price of manly honesty, would have seemed to a man of Dante's temper utterly base. Dante was far removed above the conventional standards, which provoke to such cowardly hypocrisy. Plainly, the heroic Dante desired to appear what he was. Speaking of *The Comedy*, Carlyle, who of all modern men was most like to Dante, says: "It is, at bottom, the *sincerest* of all Poems; sincerity, here, too, we find to be the measure of worth. It came out of the author's heart of hearts; and it goes deep, and through long generations, into ours. The people of Verona, when they saw him on the streets, used to say, '*Eccovi l' uom ch' è stato all' Inferno*, See, there is the man that was in Hell!' Ah, yes, he had been in Hell; — in hell enough, in long, severe sorrow and struggle, as the like of him is pretty sure to have been. *Commedias* that come out divine are not accomplished otherwise. Thought, true labor of any kind, highest virtue itself, is it not the daughter of Pain? Born as out of the black whirlwind; — true effort, in fact, as of a captive struggling to free himself: that is Thought. In all ways we are 'to become perfect through suffering.'" (*Lectures on Heroes*, III).]

perhaps he tried, and did not succeed? The ways of illicit love are secret and nocturnal, and it requires but little care to hide them from the eyes of men.<sup>1</sup> Even granting, therefore, that Dante was really luxurious and adulterous, his contemporaries could at best suspect it, — guess it, perhaps: they could never know it with certainty, and therefore, in regard to this matter, their statements cannot be called testimonies, — much less authentic testimonies.

Nevertheless, even modern writers try to deduce proofs of Dante's amorous passion from his own words. Formerly they cited, in this connection, the Poet's confessions in the last cantos of the *Purgatory*. In other works of ours, we believe we have forever overthrown all arguments of this kind, and shown definitely what is the real meaning of those confessions.<sup>2</sup> In fact, the German, Scheffer-Boichorst, the most recent accuser of Dante, no longer ventured to base his charge of luxury and adultery upon the closing cantos of the *Purgatory*. Instead of this, he brought up the story of Gentucca (*Purg.*, XXIV, 17 sqq.), who, being connected with events that occurred after the vision, would certainly not have been mentioned by Dante, if his love for her had been sensual, unless we are willing to admit the absurdity that, in the same book in which he so touchingly describes his bitter repentance,<sup>3</sup> the Poet meant to tell us, in an almost frivolous way, that he fell back into his old sin.

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[<sup>1</sup> Surely no statement could be more contrary to notorious facts. How, then, did Dante come to know the facts about Guido Guinicelli, Brunetto Latini, and others of his contemporaries? The whole argument is too weak for serious consideration.]

[<sup>2</sup> True; but not the meaning of the fact that Dante enters the flames of the seventh circle, and suffers agonies in them (*Purg.*, XXVII, 19 sqq.).]

[<sup>3</sup> Here the author unwittingly admits that Dante bitterly repented of the sin of luxury, which is the point at issue. Otherwise, his argument has no force.]

Among the letters which pass under Dante's name, there is one in which the author gives an account of a case in which he fell violently in love. This letter being a stupid imposture, we throw it out of evidence. But even those who consider it authentic must interpret it altogether allegorically, unless they wish to place the Poet in a ridiculous position, and make him guilty of incomprehensible self-contradictions. For it would certainly be, in the highest degree, ridiculous, that a man of forty, a husband and a father, at a time when epistolary correspondence was no over-easy matter, should have written a letter to the Marquis Morovello Malaspina, for no other purpose than to tell him the great and important news, that he had fallen in love with a woman! Besides, about the same time when this letter is supposed to have been written to the Marquis Malaspina, Dante wrote in *The Feast* (I, 2): "I dread the disfame of having nurtured so great a passion as all who read the above-named odes conceive to have ruled within me. This disfame now ceases, through the present candid speaking with regard to myself; [for this shows that not passion but virtue was the moving cause]." How, in all the world, is it possible that a man, who did not wish to have an amorous passion attributed to him, should, at the same time, have written a letter to the Marquis Malaspina, to inform him that he had been violently seized with an amorous passion? And how brazen-faced must have been the man who wrote such words, if, as is said, he was known to his contemporaries, to his pupils, and to his own son, to be a luxurious man and an adulterous husband?<sup>1</sup>

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[<sup>1</sup> The letter in question, which most great Dante-scholars consider genuine, and which, indeed, bears considerable internal evidence of being so, is, after all, nothing so very compromising. Moreover, it shows two things: (1) that Dante was aware that he bore a reputation for amorousness; (2) that he had made long and honest efforts not to deserve that reputation. The letter runs as follows: —



Dante protests in express terms, that after the death of Beatrice, he loved no other lady than Philosophy. In *The Feast* (II, 16) he writes: "I declare and affirm that the lady

"In order that my Lord may not be in ignorance respecting the shackles of his servant, who is ruled by feelings of gratitude, and lest some garbled account, calculated, as is not unfrequently the case, to sow the seeds of misconceptions, should seek to convince you that I have been made a prisoner through carelessness, I have thought it well to address the following brief words of self-defence to Your Magnificence.

"After my departure, then, from the Court for which I have since frequently longed, and in which, as you often saw with amazement, I was permitted to exercise the functions of freedom, I had hardly planted my feet by the streams of Arno, when, suddenly, alas! there appeared, descending like a thunderbolt, I know not how, a woman suited in all respects to my principles, my character, and my fortune. O with what astonished admiration did I behold her! But amazement soon gave place to the terror of the thunder that followed it. For, just as the lightnings from heaven are followed instantaneously by thunder, so, no sooner had I beheld the flash of her beauty than an awful and imperious love for her took possession of me. And this Love, like a prince banished from his country and restored after a long exile, either slew, or cast forth, or bound in fetters whatever within me was contrary to him. He therefore slew that laudable resolution of mine, whereby I held aloof from women and from songs about women; nay, he ruthlessly banished, as something traitorous, those assiduous meditations, in which I gazed upon things both celestial and terrestrial; and, finally, lest my soul should any longer rebel against him, he bound my free choice in fetters, so that I am obliged to turn, not where I wish, but where he wishes. So, Love rules in me without resistance from any power; in what manner he rules me, you will discover from the accompanying composition."

If this letter be a forgery, it is certainly a very clever one. In any case it cannot be called either frivolous, compromising, or unworthy of Dante. It contains no evidence of sensual love. The "accompanying" composition appears to have been the ode beginning, "Amor, dacchè convien pur ch'io mi doglia," which contains many expressions similar to those occurring in this letter. That Dante was very sensitive to the charms of women, is beyond any question.]

of whom I became enamored, after the first love, was the most beautiful and most virtuous daughter of the Emperor of the Universe, to whom Pythagoras gave the name of Philosophy.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, either the pretended loves of Dante occurred after these words were written, that is to say, the Poet began to abandon himself to the passion of love when he was almost fifty years old; or else they occurred before, in which case Dante has lied impudently. For those who will not desist from accusing Dante of luxury and adultery, there is no third alternate.<sup>2</sup> We, on the contrary, say, Dante's protest is true, and the loves attributed to him are fables.

Dionisi, Gian Giacopo: *Preparazione Istorica e Critica*, II, pp. 29-110.

Veratti, Bart.: *Gli Amori di Dante*, in *Opuscoli Religiosi e Morali di Modena*, 1865-66. Vol. V, pp. 246 sqq.; Vol. VI, pp. 42 sqq., 244 sqq.

Minich, Raf.: *Degli Amori di Dante veri e supposti*. Memoir. Padua, 1871, 8vo.

Scartazzini, G. A.: *Dante in Germania* [see p. 15]. Appendix, § v.

[<sup>1</sup> And yet our author elsewhere devotes page after page to proving that Dante did love another woman shortly after Beatrice's death (see pp. 55 sqq.).]

[<sup>2</sup> It is needless to say that this conclusion is utterly illogical, unfair, and at variance with facts.]

## CHAPTER III.

### THE MINOR WORKS.



§ 1. THE BOOK OF LYRIC POEMS. — At the age of eighteen, Dante, who “had already seen the art of saying words in rhyme,” having had a marvellous vision, proposed to make a sonnet, in which he should salute all the “faithful of Love,” and, with the request that they would expound his vision, he wrote to them what he had seen in his sleep.<sup>1</sup> This sonnet, written in 1283, is the earliest poetical attempt of Dante’s that has come down to us. After this, he continued to write sonnets, odes, and other poetical compositions, both during the life of Beatrice and after her death. At first, he imitated the Provençal troubadours and the first love-poets that wrote in the vulgar tongue. Afterwards, freeing himself from the shackles of these, and turning his back upon the poetical rules of a conventional love, he began to poetize according to the dictates of his heart, and drew forth new rhymes, that is, a new species of poetry and a new poetic style, far superior to those of the poets who had preceded him. The numerous lyrics composed by him at different times generally treat of one and the same

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[<sup>1</sup> *New Life*, Chap. III.]



subject, namely, Love; because, according to the theories which he adopted, it was not allowed to write poetry upon any other subject. But, just as his different lyrics were written at two different periods of his inner life, so they belong to two very distinct cycles. One part belongs to the cycle of the *The New Life*; the other, to the cycle of *The Love-Feast*.

In the lyrics which belong to the cycle of *The New Life*, a part of which were collected, arranged, and commented on by the Poet in that youthful work, Dante depicts his life of love during the life of Beatrice and the time immediately following her death. The beauties, external and internal, of the beloved lady; the joys and hopes of the lover, to whom the celestial beauty was revealed in the terrestrial; the sufferings of a heart that loves with the utmost tenderness and beats only for the beloved object; the painful presentiment that ruthless death was about to put a period to the delights and hopes of love; the unfathomable and almost desperate grief caused by the loss of the loved one, — such are the subjects of these poems, through which passes a breath of the deepest affection, laden with airs from the abysses of mediæval mysticism. The subject of the lyrics belonging to the cycle of *The Love-Feast* is likewise Love. But, whereas the former depict a mystical love, the latter depict a philosophical one. The character, as well as the object, of the love differs in the two cycles. In the second, we no longer find a love, self-forgetful, all pure, and, therefore, all serene; but a

love, restless, never satisfied, because the loved one, who is Science, never keeps her promises. Hence, in these lyrics, we find reflected the inner unrest of a man who goes seeking and does not find, who, just when he flatters himself that he has reached the goal of his desire, discovers that he has been deluded. For this reason, they sometimes speak the enthusiastic language of a man intoxicated with love, sometimes the bitter language of the hurt lover, whose lady has shown herself too harsh and hard. On the other hand, the whole of the lyric poems, especially those of the second cycle, conceal, beneath the cloak of a natural love, an allegorical and moral sense, to which the Poet desires the reader, above all, to direct his attention.

The best editions of *The Book of Lyric Poems* are those of Fraticelli and Giuliani, mentioned above (Pt. II, chap. I, § 8). A critical edition — really critical in every respect, text, selection, distribution, interpretation, and parallelisms — has long been a *desideratum*, but will, perhaps, never be made. A great, perhaps the greatest, difficulty consists in determining what and how many pieces really belong to Dante, and what have erroneously been attributed to him. And with respect to this matter we are still in the dark, and are likely to remain so, as long as the critical canon of individual taste is in force ; that is, so long as the individual critic shall continue to deliver such judgments as these : “ This piece is worthy of Dante ; this other is not : therefore, it is not his.”<sup>1</sup> A mere comparison between

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[<sup>1</sup> In this connection it is interesting to mark how very widely even great critics may differ in such matters. Take, for instance, the magnifi-

the collections of Fraticelli and Giuliani, to speak of no others, is sufficient to show how much in the dark we are.

		Authentic.	
		ACCORDING TO	
		FRATICELLI.	GIULIANI.
Sonnets . . . . .		44	37
Ballads . . . . .		10	5
Odes ( <i>canzoni</i> ) . . . . .		20	20
Sextains . . . . .		3	1
Doubtful.			
Sonnets . . . . .		5	8
Ballads . . . . .		2	4
Odes . . . . .		1	1
Sextains . . . . .			2
Spurious.			
Sonnets . . . . .		34	} All the rest.
Ballads . . . . .		3	
Odes . . . . .		14	
Madrigals . . . . .		3	

How unsafe a guide individual taste is, even when, with admirable modesty, it calls itself "the Poet's reason," has been proved over and over again by the most striking examples. Thus, all editors have agreed in rejecting, as spurious and belonging to the fifteenth century, the two sonnets, "Bicci Novel, figliuol di non so cui," and "Chi udisse tossir la mal

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cent poem, *O Patria degna di trionfal fama*. Carducci and Giuliani both maintain, in the strongest terms, that it does not belong to Dante, whereas our author, in his *Dante Alighieri* (see above, p. 12), calls it, "perhaps, — ay, without perhaps, — the crown of Dante's lyric poetry." Witte does not venture an opinion. (See Witte's *Dante-Forschungen*, Vol. II, p. 282.)]



fatata";<sup>1</sup> and yet the "anonymous Florentine" of the fourteenth century, edited by Fanfani, appears, from his commentary on the twenty-third canto of the *Purgatory*, to have known them. In the same way, not a few other pieces which the criticism has declared must be spurious, might really belong to Dante.

That all Dante's lyrical compositions were intended to have an inner allegorical meaning, is clear from what he says in the twenty-fifth chapter of *The New Life*. How he meant them to be interpreted, he has shown in his commentaries to the odes in *The Feast*. Some think that even the lyrics belonging to the cycle of *The New Life* are purely allegorical, and, hence, deny the existence of Beatrice, whom they consider to be merely an abstraction, a personified idea. Others, conversely, in spite of the repeated declarations of the Poet to the contrary, maintain that even the lady spoken of in the lyrics belonging to the cycle of *The Feast* was a real woman, or rather, that there were several real women loved by Dante, who afterwards (they say) ascribed to his lyrics an allegorical meaning, which had not entered his head when he wrote them. Both these opinions are undeserving of serious consideration, and we must accept the express statements of the Poet, who speaks of his two loves, — his love for Beatrice and his love for Science.

The best thing thus far written on the Lyric Poems is the work of Giosuè Carducci, *Delle Rime di Dante Alighieri*, first published in the collection, *Dante e il suo Secolo*, Florence, 1865, pp. 715-59, and afterwards in his *Studi Letterari*, Leghorn, 1874, pp. 139-237. We here reproduce the last page of it: —

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[<sup>1</sup> "O Bicci, pretty son of who knows whom," and "To hear the unlucky wife of Bicci cough." These two sonnets and the two of Bicci's in reply to them are translated in D. G. Rossetti's *Dante and his Circle*, pp. 243 sqq. See Rossetti's introduction to them.]

“Like all the rhymers of his age, Dante began by drawing his inspiration and motive from chivalrous love-poetry. At the same time, the temper of his spirit, his states of feeling, and the circumstances of the times gave to his lyrical effusions something that was ecstatic and solemn; in one word, a mystical *afflatus*, under the influence of which the ‘first matter’ of that poetry, the chivalrous treatment of love, was altogether changed, and assumed a new form. But, after the death of Beatrice, the ardor of his youthful feelings, till then held in check, burst out into flame, and so poetry became a real expression of natural passion. In the course of years and of his studies, the poet repented, almost with shame, of having written this poetry, and so he transmuted these last productions into a symbolic representation of the love of Science, and, passing on to the purely didactic and to lyric poetry of the gnomic sort, he became the singer of righteousness, until from Philosophy he went forward to Theology, and from the ‘gentle lady’ returned to Beatrice. And in all these transitions, and in all these periods, which are no posthumous invention of my poor critical faculty, but correspond to the three parts into which *The New Life* is essentially divided, the Poet had already understood and reconciled the three principles which, at that time, separately informed the literature, not only of Italy, but of all Christendom, and made it put on three different modes of representation. From the chivalrous principle which inspired the lyrics of the first part of *The New Life*, he rose transcendently to the mystic and religious principle which gives form to the ‘new rhymes’ of the second part; and, drawing forth from the religious principle the didactic element which it had absorbed, he ventured to transplant it into the vulgar tongue, and to reunite it with the ancient traditions in *The Feast*, which is, so to speak, an episode in *The New Life*. In doing so, he was the first person to furnish the Italian people with a notable

fresh literary presentation of the classical and national principle in the vulgar tongue. In his Lyric Poems, he adopted not only the principles of the Middle Age, but also its various literary forms—the chivalrous and the sensual, the mystical and the allegorical, the didactic and the classic, all of which, through the assimilating power of Italian genius, were finally to unite harmoniously in the great poem.”

Fratricelli, Pietro: *Dissertazione sulle Poesie Liriche*, in the *Opere Minori di Dante Alighieri*, Vol. I, pp. 1–66. Florence, 1873.

Betti Salv.: *Intorno ad alcuni Studi sulle Rime di Dante*. Rome, 1842.

De Amicis Vic.: *Dell' Amore e della Lirica di Dante*. Naples, 1865.

Pantano, Ed.: *Della Lirica di Dante*. Palermo, 1865.

[Witte, Karl: *Canzone di Dante in Morte di Arrigo VII*, in *Dante-Forschungen*, Vol. I, pp. 418 sqq. *Ungedruckte Gedichte Dante's*; *ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 434 sqq. *Rime inedite attribuite a Dante*; *ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 524 sqq.]

§ 2. THE NEW LIFE.—The subject of this youthful work of Dante's is the candid and melancholy story of his love for Beatrice, from his first meeting with her in 1274, down to the marvellous vision of the year 1300. Dante entitled the little book *The New Life*, because, on his first meeting with Beatrice, there began for him a life altogether different from that which had preceded it, and from that moment he dated his *palingenesia*, or regeneration. The little work is put together out of Lyric Poems, Narration, and Scholastic Divisions. Having told the story of his first meeting with Beatrice, the



Poet goes on to describe her physical and her spiritual beauty, and records the effects produced upon him by the sight of her and by her salutation, as well as the simulations used by him to conceal from others the secret of his heart. The presentiment of death and painful loss, which never left him, proves correct: with a shriek of despairing grief, he begins to tell the story of Beatrice's death and his own boundless suffering, when he had lost the first delight of his soul. Then comes a sort of interlude, in which he tells us of the origin and growth of his inclination, afterwards struggled against, for the fair consoler. Finally, the Poet tells us how the love for the glorified Beatrice was re-kindled in him, and how a marvellous vision made him resolve to devote himself fervently to study, in order to fit him to raise a worthy monument to her. The author's purpose was to furnish his love-lyrics with an authentic commentary, and, at the same time, to raise a monument to his Beatrice—a monument which afterwards seemed to him too poor. *The New Life* is the necessary and indispensable introduction to the study of *The Comedy*.

The *editio princeps* is that of Sermartelli, Florence, 1576, small 8vo. Besides the editions noticed above (Pt. II, Chap. I, § 8), the following are deserving of mention:—

*La Vita Nuova di Dante Alighieri, secondo la Lezione di un Codice inedito del secolo XV.* Pesaro, 1829, 8vo.

*La Vita Nuova di Dante Alighieri.* Venice, 1865, 4to.

D' Ancona, Alessandro: *La Vita Nuova di Dante Alighieri*,

*riscontrata su Codice e Stampe, preceduta da uno Studio su Beatrice e seguita da Illustrazioni.* This is not only the most splendid, but also by far the best, edition of *The New Life* published so far.

A good, cheap edition is that of Sonzogno, Milan, 1882, 8vo. [The following, likewise, is cheap, convenient, and excellent : —

Witte, Carlo : *La Vita Nuova di Dante Allighieri*,<sup>1</sup> *ricorretta coll' Ajuto di Testi a Penna ed illustrata.* Leipzig, 1876, 12mo. (Contains account of all editions.)]

Fratricelli and others maintain that *Vita Nuova* (New Life) means youthful life ; but youthful life, or adolescence, does not begin at the ninth year of life, nor was the Latin word *nova*, employed by Dante, ever used in the sense of youthful.

According to Alessandro d' Ancona, *The New Life* consists of a proem and six parts : —

Part I (Chapp. 1-17) might be entitled *Youthful Loves, and Lyrics on the Physical Beauty of Beatrice*. In this we have a series of kindred facts and thoughts, well linked together ; a kind of feeling that is still natural and human ; a species of poetry not yet such as will bring the Poet to fame ; a description of events and feelings in Dante's life, first from his eighth year to his eighteenth, and then from his eighteenth to his twenty-second.

Part II (Chapp. 18-28) contains the praises of Beatrice's spiritual beauties, set forth in the "new rhymes," in which the tongue spoke, almost of its own accord, and in which we have an account of acts and thoughts of Dante, and the poems composed by him, from his twenty-second to his twenty-fifth year.

Part III (Chapp. 29-35) includes the death of Beatrice, and the poems of grief.

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[<sup>1</sup> So Witte always writes Dante's surname. See his essay, *Dante's Familienname*, in *Dante-Forschungen*, Vol. II, pp. 22 sqq.]

Part IV (Chapp. 36-39) treats of his love for the "gentle lady."

Part V (Chapp. 40-42) tells of the reawakening of his love for the departed Beatrice, or the acts and thoughts of Dante from the thirty-fourth (?) year of his age to the beginning of the thirty-fifth.

Part VI (Chap. 43) is the conclusion.

Centofanti, Silv.: *Sulla Vita Nuova*. A Lecture. Padua, 1845.

Orlandini, Silv.: *Della Vita Nuova di Dante*. In the volume, *Dante e il suo Secolo*, pp. 383-419.

Todeschini, Gius.: *Cronologia della Vita Nuova*, in *Scritti su Dante*, I, pp. 323-31.

Renier, Rodolfo: *La Vita Nuova e la Fiammetta*. A Critical Study. Turin and Rome, 1879. (This is the best work on Dante's *New Life* and love.)

§ 3. THE *DE VULGARI ELOQUENTIA*. — Finding that no one before him had treated of "Vulgar Eloquence," and recognizing the necessity and utility of such a treatise, Dante set to work to write an *Ars Poetica*, reducing many scattered doctrines to a system, and fixing, in teachable form, the numerous poetic rules, followed with spontaneous agreement by poets up to that time. This work, which, after being begun, was for a time suspended,<sup>1</sup> and, though resumed, was never brought to a conclusion, sets out with a discussion of the origin of human speech, then dwells upon certain scholastic questions, and then, beginning with the confusion of tongues at the Tower of Babel, and following the diffusion of different languages over the world, stops

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[<sup>1</sup> This is shown by the opening lines of the second book.]



at those of Europe, and particularly those of Southern Europe, which are summarily distinguished by their different affirmative particles. These three languages — the language of *oc*, the language of *oil*, and the language of *sì*<sup>1</sup> — have a common origin, since they have many words in which they agree. After speaking of the varieties of these languages and the ground of them, the author comes to treat of the language of *sì*, passes in review fourteen of the principal dialects then spoken in Italy, and concludes that not one of them is worthy to take precedence of all the rest, but that the illustrious, cardinal, aulic, and curial vulgar tongue is that which is common to all the cities of Italy, but seems to belong to none. Having stated the reasons why he calls this speech *illustrious*, *cardinal*, *aulic*, and *curial*, he closes the first book with the remark that this vulgar tongue is what is called the vulgar Italian. In the second book, which was never finished, Dante inquires what persons should write, and what subjects should be treated, in the “illustrious vulgar,” and then goes on to speak of the ode (*canzone*), — that noblest form of which he was in search. This little work, the earliest treatise on the history of languages, gave occasion, from the moment of its appearance, to many grave questions, some of which have remained unsettled down to our own time.

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[<sup>1</sup> In other words, Provençal, French, and Italian. It is curious that Dante calls Provençal Spanish (Bk. I, chap. viij).]

Instead of the title, *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, the title *De Vulgari Eloquio* was long in use. That the former is the authentic title, that is, the one given to the work by the author himself, is shown by the following facts : —

(1) In *The Feast* (I, 4), Dante writes: Of this matter I shall speak elsewhere more fully, in a book which, God willing, I intend to write on *Vulgar Eloquence*. (2) At the very beginning of the work itself (I, 1), Dante says his purpose is to treat "*De Vulgaris Eloquentiae Doctrina*." (3) Elsewhere (I, 19), he declares it to be his purpose "*Doctrinam de Vulgari Eloquentia tradere*." (4) The chronicler Giovanni Villani says that Dante "composed a little book, entitled *De Vulgari Eloquentia*." (5) Boccaccio, in his *Vita di Dante*, writes: "He composed, in Latin prose, a little book which he called *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, wherein he intended to give instruction, to whoever desired to learn, in the art of lyric poetry" (*del dire in rima*). (6) Leonardi Bruni says, "Dante wrote also another book, entitled *De Vulgari Eloquentia*." Since all our authorities are in entire agreement, we must needs follow them.

This work was first published in 1529, in the Italian translation of Trissino.<sup>1</sup> The Florentines, and those who sought to maintain the primacy of the Italian dialect, raised many doubts with regard to its authenticity, going so far as to deny the existence of the Latin text from which Trissino professed to have made his translation. But, in 1577, Jacopo Corbinelli published the Latin original in Paris, and subsequently three other ancient manuscripts containing it were discovered. Still, this did not put an end to the contest. Even in the present century, Filippo Scolari contested the authenticity of the work. When this was finally and universally admitted, there began a series of disputes, which are still going on, in regard to the

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[<sup>1</sup> This translation, which is given in Fraticelli's edition, along with the original Latin, is very poor, and sometimes misleading.]

doctrines taught by Dante in the work. As we cannot here enter into these disputes and discussions, we must simply refer the reader to the following works, which treat of them :<sup>1</sup> —

Fontanini, Giusto : *Eloquenza Italiana*, Bk. II, chap. xxxij sqq.

Perticari, Giulio : *Dell' Amor patrio di Dante e del suo Libro intorno al Volgare Eloquio*. Milan, 1820.

Nicolini, G. B. : *Considerazioni intorno agli Asserti di Dante nel Libro della Volgare Eloquenza*, etc., in his Works, 1847, pp. 90–107.

Fraticelli, Pietro : *Dissertazione sul Volgare Eloquio*, in *Opere Minori di Dante*, Vol. II, pp. 121–137.

Cavaliere, Angelo : *Del Volgare Eloquio di Dante*, in *Dante e il suo Secolo*. Florence, 1865–6, pp. 669–77.

Boehmer, Ed. : *Ueber Dante's Schrift De Vulgari Eloquentia*. Halle, 1868.

D' Ovidio, Franc. : *Sul Trattato De Vulg. Eloq. di Dante Alighieri*. Critical Essays. Naples, 1879, pp. 330–436. (This is the most important among the many treatises that have been published on the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*).

§ 4. THE LOVE-FEAST. — The consciousness of having risen above the common crowd ; the desire to place science within the reach of all, and to reconcile and

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[<sup>1</sup> The false title, so generally given to the work, naturally led many persons to believe that its subject was philological, and that Dante, the father of Italian, had therein set to work to settle which was the true Italian dialect. Dante does, indeed, deal with the Italian dialects cursorily; but the purpose of the work was plainly to give instruction in the poetic art of the vulgar tongue. See a letter from Alessandro Manzoni to Ruggero Bonghi, prefixed to Giuliani's edition of the work. That Dante meant to extend the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* to ten books, and to make it a complete treatise on Romance poetry, is, I think, perfectly clear, from Eclogue I, vv. 68 sqq. See above, p. 209, note.]



attemper the old with the new; the love of fame and a strong desire to free himself from dreaded infamy, made Dante resolve to write a great work,—a work which, in many respects, and considering the time at which it was written, is unique in its kind. Having in his mind, perhaps, the *Symposia* of Plato and Plutarch, he gave this work the title of *Feast* (*Convivio*)—an allegorical title having reference to the author's intention to serve up the bread of science to whoever stood in need of it, and could not have it. The work assumes the form of a commentary upon the author's philosophical love-lyrics. It was his intention to write commentaries to fourteen of these poems, so that the complete work would have comprehended fifteen treatises, including the first, which forms a general introduction, stating the plan of the work and the motives which induced the author to write it, and to do so in the vulgar tongue, instead of in Latin. Only four treatises were finished: then the gigantic task was suspended, and Dante never resumed it. But, although unfinished, *The Feast* is, next to *The Comedy*, the most important of Dante's works,—important not only in itself, but still more for the light it throws upon the true method of interpreting the *Sacred Poem*.

The subject of the work is Philosophy, which Dante defines as the “loving treatment of Wisdom” [III, 12]. But, inasmuch as, according to him, Philosophy embraces the whole universe, things sensual and material, things supernatural and spiritual, the human and the divine,

so the work was intended to form a vast encyclopædia of human knowledge. Dante, in writing this work, first set the example of philosophizing in the vulgar tongue. In doing so, he opened a new path to science; furnished the first model of scientific Italian prose; rejuvenated science, by introducing consciousness into it; first drew philosophy out of "the schools of the religious and the circles of the philosophers," and introduced it into political and civil life; gave philosophy a new purpose, a new dress, a new movement.

Modern writers are wont to call *The Feast, Il Convito*. The title occurs in the work itself eight times, and in all these cases, twenty-four codices, and among them the most ancient and authoritative, read, not *Convito*, but *Convivio*. But the matter is one of very slight importance.<sup>1</sup>

It would be impossible to give a compendious analysis of a work of this kind, embracing so many various subjects. Vito Fornari, in his admirable work mentioned below, observes: "The character of the style is uniform in all the four treatises; and as to the intrinsic worth of the thought, taking the good with the poor parts, there is little to choose between them. In the first treatise, the chapters treating of the vulgar tongue are especially remarkable for brilliancy of conception and vivacity of style; most of the rest is mere padding. In the second and third, amid a mass of ineptitudes, there are some exquisite observations on the human spirit, and some profound views in metaphysics. The fourth treats of morals, for the most part in a way which is neither puritanical nor vulgar; but it sets out with

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[<sup>1</sup> See Karl Witte's essay, *Convivio o Convito?* in *Dante-Forschungen*, Vol. II, pp. 574-80.]

some very lofty observations on politics and the philosophy of history."

A catalogue of the manuscripts of *The Feast* is to be found in Giuliani's edition (Florence, 1875), pp. xxv-xxix. The *editio princeps* is the Florentine one of Bonaccorsi, 1490, 8vo. *The Feast* was three times reprinted in the sixteenth century, seven times in the eighteenth, and ten times in the nineteenth. Besides the editions of Fraticelli and Giuliani mentioned above (p. 187), there are three others deserving of mention: (1) the Milan edition of 1826; (2) the Padua of 1827; and (3) the Modena of 1827 (with Pederzini's notes).<sup>1</sup>

Selmi, Francesco: *Il Convito, sua Cronologia, Intendimento, Attinenze alle altre Opere di Dante*. Turin, 1865.

Fornari, Vito: *Del Convito di Dante*, in *Dante e il suo Secolo*, pp. 443-60.

Vassallo, Carlo: *Il Convito di Dante Alighieri*. A Lecture. Florence, 1876.

§ 5. THE *DE MONARCHIA*.—In the Middle Age, the eyes of all the civilized peoples of Europe were constantly turned toward Rome, not merely because that city was the centre of the dominant religion, but also because the memories of a glorious past were inseparable from it. True, the Roman Empire had perished ages before; nevertheless, there still lived in men's hearts the desire and the hope to see it rise again from its ruins. Various attempts, attended with more or less success, were made to restore it; but all in vain. The

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[<sup>1</sup> It must be candidly confessed that there does not exist any even tolerable edition of *The Feast*. Even that of Giuliani, by far the best, is in no sense a scholarly work.]



hand that moves on the dial-plate of history would not be set back. The name *Roman* crossed the Alps, being usurped by a people whom the Romans had once conquered and enslaved. It seemed a fine thing to these slaves to assume the name of their masters, and beautiful Ausonia, naturally enough, had strong charms for a people which at all times had shown a strong liking for a seat at others' boards. Assuming the pompous title of *The Holy Roman Empire of the Germanic Nation*, the stranger imagined that he had therewith acquired the rights once exercised by those who had made themselves lords of the world. And even Italy was not without persons inclined to recognize these pretended rights, and to venerate, in the foreigner, the rightful successor of the ancient Cæsars. Nay, thousands and tens of thousands of persons, standing high above the vulgar crowd, looked hopefully to the stranger, and expected to see peace restored to the world, and the foundations of human happiness laid, by his means.

Alongside the throne of the pretended Cæsars rose the seat of those who, professing to follow in the footsteps of the poor carpenter of Nazareth, who declared that his kingdom was not of this world, had converted the cross into a throne, the common reed into a sceptre, and the crown of thorns into a triple crown of gold. At one time, the two powers, the temporal and the spiritual, were in agreement. But, as soon as the ambitious priest ventured to claim that to him, by divine right, belonged the sovereignty of the universe, and that all

Christian princes must wait upon his nod, the harmony was at an end. Hence arose the interminable struggles between the Papacy and the Empire — struggles that at last led to the destruction of both, and were the birth-throes of the liberty of the Communes and the peoples.

In Dante's time, the struggle was still going on, although the imperial power in Italy had ceased to be any thing more than a party-title, and the Papacy had suddenly fallen from the height of its power into the deepest depths of abasement. In spite of all this, the old Guelph and Ghibelline factions still continued, waging war with each other, banishing each other in turn, no longer to defend the rights of the pontiff or the emperor, but in behalf of their own interests, and pursuing their course, the one party under the standard of the keys and the yellow lilies, the other, under the standard of the eagle, — each being appropriated by one of the parties. And, besides the dissensions, contests, and wars that went on between the two great factions, every city had its own particular factions and cabals. Hence arose these discords between citizens of the same city, the civil broils, the murders, the condemnations, the banishments. Dante was consumed with a desire to do what in him lay, to aid in putting a stop to these discords and the consequent evils, which were devastating Italy. Like the idealist he was, he thought he could attain this end by educating the people; and so he wrote the treatise *De Monarchia*, in which he endeavors to show that the Monarchy — that is, the Empire, which he defines to

be the one power superior to all others in time<sup>1</sup>—is absolutely necessary to humanity, in order that it may enjoy peace, and reach the goal of human civilization.<sup>2</sup> Thence he goes on to show that universal empire belongs, not by human, but by divine, right, to the Roman people; and finally, combating the pretensions of the Roman curia, he tries to prove that the sovereignty of the Monarchy, that is, of the Empire, is not derived from men, even were they popes, but directly from God.

Dante's reward for all this laborious demonstration was, that his book was condemned to the flames, as containing heresies, and his bones came very near being disinterred and burnt.

The first edition of the *De Monarchia* was issued at Bâle, in 1559, by John Oporinus. Between that date and 1618, it was reprinted in Germany five times. It was first printed in Italy, in 1740, at Venice, with the date Geneva. At the present day, some twenty editions of it can be counted, the latest being that of Giuliani, with many textual emendations and a prolix commentary.

In the last paragraph of the third and last book of the treatise, Dante recapitulates and sums up his system in the following terms:—

“Man alone, among all beings, occupies a middle position between things corruptible and things incorruptible. For this

[<sup>1</sup> The Papacy is regarded as a spiritual, not a temporal power.]

[<sup>2</sup> Sic patet quod ad bene esse mundi necesse est *Monarchiam* esse, sive *Imperium*. I, 7 *ad fin.* Compare the five following chapters.]



reason, he is rightly compared by philosophers to the horizon,<sup>1</sup> which lies between two hemispheres. For man, if he is viewed with reference to his two essential parts, that is, body and soul, is corruptible as regards the one, that is, the body ; incorruptible as regards the other, namely, the soul. And therefore the Philosopher spoke correctly when, in the second book of the *De Anima*, he said of man, in so far as he is incorruptible : ‘And this alone can be separated as the eternal from the corruptible.’<sup>2</sup>

“If, then, man occupies a middle position between things corruptible and things incorruptible, since every mean knows the nature of its extremes, man must know both natures. And, since all nature is ordered with reference to an ultimate end, it follows that man’s end is twofold. And, just as he alone, of all beings, participates both in corruptibility and incorruptibility, so he alone, among all beings, is ordered with reference to two ultimate ends—to one, as a corruptible being, to the other, as an incorruptible being. Two ends, therefore, ineffable Providence has appointed to man to be aimed at, namely, blessedness in this life, which consists in the exercise of native virtue, and is represented by the Earthly Paradise ; and blessedness in life eternal, which consists in the enjoyment of the vision of God, a thing not to be attained through any native virtue, unless aided by divine light, and which is to be understood by the Heavenly Paradise.

“These two forms of blessedness, like two different conclu-

[<sup>1</sup> Albertus Magnus says, “Intelligence comprehends things generated, nature, and the horizon of nature, viz., the soul.” Comments to *Liber de Causis*, Prop. IX, f. 116, A. 40. Cf. Bach’s *Des Albertus Magnus Verhältniss zu der Erkenntnisslehre der Griechen, Lateiner, Araber und Juden*, p. 187, note 17.]

[<sup>2</sup> Καὶ τοῦτο μόνον ἐνδέχεται χωρίζεσθαι, καθάπερ τὸ αἰδίον τοῦ φθαρτοῦ. *De Anima*, II, 2, 9; 413<sup>b</sup> 26 sq.]

sions, have to be reached by different means. For we reach the former through philosophic teaching, provided we follow it and act in accordance with the intellectual and moral virtues. The latter, on the other hand, we reach through spiritual teaching, which transcends human reason, provided we follow it, and act according to the theological virtues, — Faith, Hope, and Charity.

“These ends and means, therefore, although they have been manifested to us (the former by human reason, fully exhibited to us by the Philosophers ; the latter, by the Holy Spirit, who through the Prophets, the Sacred Writers, through Jesus Christ, the son of God, coeternal with Himself, has revealed to us supernatural truth and the things necessary for us), would be disregarded by human passion, if men were not restrained in their course by bit and bridle, like horses that run wild in their bestiality. For this reason, man required a double directive, corresponding to his double end. He required the Supreme Pontiff to guide the human race to life eternal, in accordance with revealed truth ; and the Emperor to guide the human race to temporal felicity, in accordance with the teachings of Philosophy.

“And since few, if any, and these with the utmost difficulty, can reach this haven, unless the waves of alluring desire are stilled, and the human race enjoys the blessings of peace, this is the goal which, above all, the Guardian of the world, who is called the Roman Prince (*Romanus Princeps*), must seek to reach, so that, in their narrow mortal sphere, men may live in freedom and peace ; and, since the arrangement of this world follows the arrangement inherent in the revolutions of the heavens, it is needful, in order that the useful teachings of Liberty and Peace may be brought to bear with due regard to times and places, that these be dispensed by that Guardian who beholds, at one glance, the whole arrangement of the

heavens. But this is none other than He who foreordained this arrangement, in order that, exerting His providence through it, he might subject all things to His orders. If this be true, God alone elects, God alone confirms, since He has no superior.

“From this we may draw the further conclusion, that neither those who now call themselves Electors, nor any others, of whatever sort, who have been so called, ought to be so called: nay, they ought rather to be considered Deputies (*Denuntiatores*) of Divine Providence. Hence it is that those to whom the dignity has been entrusted sometimes disagree, either because all, or because some of them, blinded by the mists of passion, do not discern the face of the divine dispensation. Thus, therefore, it is manifest that the authority of the temporal Monarch descends to him directly, and not through any medium, from the fountain of universal authority. This fountain, though united in the high tower of its simplicity, flows down into many channels, out of the fulness of Divine Goodness.

“And now, I seem to have reached the goal which I set myself. For we have made clear the truth with regard to the question, whether the office of the Monarchy [Empire] was necessary for the well-being of the world; as well as with regard to the other question, whether the Roman people had obtained the Empire by right; and, finally, as regards the question, whether the authority of the Monarch [Emperor] is derived directly from God, or from another. The truth with respect to this last question must not be taken so strictly as to mean that the Roman Prince is not, in some respects, subject to the Roman Pontiff, the fact being that this mortal felicity of ours is, in some sense, ordered with a view to immortal felicity. Let Cæsar, therefore, display that reverence for Peter which the first-born son ought to display for the father, so that, being illuminated with the light of his father’s grace, he may with greater virtue,



enlighten the world, which he has been called to govern by Him who is Governor of all things, spiritual and temporal.”<sup>1</sup>

With regard to the fortunes of the *De Monarchia*, Boccaccio writes: “Some years after the author’s death, this book was condemned by M. Bertrand, Cardinal du Pojet, papal legate in the parts of Lombardy during the pontificate of John XXII. The reason of this was, that Ludwig, Duke of Bavaria, having been chosen by the Electors of Germany, King of the Romans, and having come to Rome to be crowned, contrary to the pleasure of said Pope John, did, while he was there, contrary to ecclesiastical ordinations, make a minorite friar, named Fra Piero della Corvara, Pope, and also made many cardinals and bishops; and then caused himself to be crowned by this Pope. And, afterwards, when in many instances there arose questions regarding [the legitimacy of] his authority, he and his followers, having found this book, began to use many arguments contained in it in defence of that authority and of themselves, for which reason, the book, which up to that time had hardly been known, became very famous. But, afterwards, when said Ludwig returned to Germany, his followers, and especially the clergy, declined and dispersed; whereupon, said cardinal, when there was no one to oppose him, having obtained the above-named book, publicly condemned it to be burnt, as containing things heretical. And he tried to do the same thing with the author’s bones, in order to blast his memory with infamy and confusion, [and would have succeeded], had he not been opposed by a valiant and noble Florentine knight, named Pino della Tosa,

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[<sup>1</sup> This is a most important passage. I know of none other in all Dante’s works in which his entire thought-system, his views of the world, and its purpose, are so clearly and succinctly set forth as in this. Here we see all the largeness and all the littleness, all the freedom and all the prejudice, of his mind. Puerile enough these views of his look now; but they were far in advance of most of the thought of the time.]

who was at that time in Bologna, where this was proposed, and by Messer Ostagio di Polenta, both powerful persons in the eyes of the above-named cardinal.

On the credibility of this story, see

Guerini and Ricci : *Studi e Polemiche Dantesche*. Bologna, 1880, pp. 71-93.

Scheffer-Boichorst, Paul : *Aus Dante's Verbannung*. Strassburg, 1882, pp. 220-23.

In opposition to the *De Monarchia*, a work was written by Vernani (Friar) : *De Potestate Summi Pontificis et de Reprobatione Monarchiae compositae a Dante Alighiero*. Bologna, 1746.

On the subject generally, see

Lanzani, Franc. : *La Monarchia di Dante*. Historical Studies. Milan, 1864.

Carmignani, Giov. : *La Monarchia di Dante*. Considerations. Pisa, 1865.

Derichsweiler, Herm. : *Dante Alighieri's Monarchia*. Muhlhausen, 1873.

[Bryce, James : *The Holy Roman Empire*. London, 1873, pp. 263 sqq. Cf. p. 256.

Freeman, E. A. : *Historical Essays*, First Series, pp. 1 sqq. Second Series, pp. 126 sqq.]

§ 6. THE *QUAESTIO DE AQUA ET TERRA*. — On one occasion, when Dante was in Mantua, there arose a certain question regarding the place and figure of the two elements, water and earth. The point of this question was, whether the water, in its sphere, or in its natural circumference, was in any part higher than the earth emerging from the waters and usually denominated the "habitable quadrant." Some argued in the

affirmative, adducing many grounds in support of their opinion. Whence Dante, "having from his childhood been continually nurtured in the love of truth, could not bear to leave said question undiscussed." And so, both from love of the truth, and still more from hatred of falsehood, he "resolved to demonstrate the truth regarding that question, and to answer the arguments raised on the opposite side." Having, therefore, repaired to Verona, he there discussed this question, "in the chapel (*sacellum*) of St. Helena, in the presence of all the clergy at Verona," and, further, "he resolved to leave, written with his own fingers, what had been settled by him, and to put down in black and white the form of the whole dispute."

The order of the inquiry is as follows: In the first place, it is shown to be impossible that the water, in any part of its circumference, should be higher than this land which emerges and is uncovered. In the second place, it is proved that this emerging land is everywhere higher than the total surface of the sea. In the third place, an objection is stated to the things demonstrated, and this objection is met and answered. In the fourth place, the final and efficient cause of this elevation or emergence of the land is shown; and, finally, the contrary arguments are answered.

This work of Dante's has been undeservedly neglected, although it is a most important document for the history of the sciences, and a monument of the vastness of Dante's genius and knowledge.



This treatise was first published in Venice in 1508. In 1576 the Neapolitan Francesco Storella included it in a collection of philosophical and scientific pamphlets. From that time on, it was almost completely forgotten, until Torri republished it, in 1843. The best edition is that of Giuliani, with commentary, translation, and elucidations (see p. 187).

The terms in which Dante speaks of the human intellect and of science in this work, are very different from those which he had used in the period of his development. In section XXII, he exclaims: "Let men cease, therefore; let them cease to inquire into those things which are above them, and inquire only so far as their powers extend, rising to immortal and divine things, as far as they may, and leaving alone the things that are too high for them." These are the words of a man who has learnt, by his own experience, what risks the man runs, who, without having examined the limits of human reason, thinks to transcend them through curiosity and display of vain doctrine.

In regard to the scientific value of the treatise, let us listen to the competent judgment of the celebrated geologist, Antonio Stoppani: "I consider it to be of the utmost importance for the glory of the great Dante and of Italy, as well as for the history of the physical sciences, that this dissertation of Dante's should be made known and appreciated a little better than it has hitherto been. . . . If we consider all the truths (we speak only of those having reference to cosmology) forecast, affirmed, and even demonstrated in these few pages of the great Poet's, they contain more (discounting what is due to Aristotle) than all the writings of the Middle Age put together. . . . Dante's work is a monument of great value for the history of the physical sciences, and one strong testimony more to the boundless genius of Dante. In it are foreshadowed, affirmed, and partly demonstrated nine cosmological truths, that is, nine of

those fundamental facts from which modern science has derived so much glory and strength, by verifying and demonstrating them, and by drawing from them an infinite number of rational and practical applications. Let me enumerate these truths. They are : —

- “(1) That the moon is the chief cause of the tides.
- “(2) That the sea-level is uniform.
- “(3) That there exists a centripetal force.
- “(4) That the earth is spherical.
- “(5) That the dry lands are simple gibbosities on the earth's surface.
- “(6) That the continents are grouped in the northern hemisphere.
- “(7) That there is universal attraction.
- “(8) That the elasticity of vapors is a motive power.
- “(9) That continents are gradually elevated.

“As I have some acquaintance with the manner in which, even apart from the scholastic form, questions of cosmological or terrestrial physics were treated in those times, what astonishes me, in this dissertation, as well as in *The Divine Comedy*, is, that Dante, in dealing with natural laws or facts, does not go in search of proofs to the abstractions of Aristotelian principles, which in those times had been converted into so many dogmas, to the transcendental abstrusities of metaphysics or theology, or to the Cabala, so much in vogue in the Middle Age, but to the laws of nature, ascertained, as well as was then possible, by observation and experience, or demonstrated by mathematics. He does not say, for example, that the earth is round, because the sphere is the most perfect of solid figures, but because it follows from the law of gravitation that a liquid cannot attain a state of equilibrium, unless all the points of its surface are equidistant from the centre of attraction. Making this law

the basis of experiment, he is able to draw the necessary conclusion, that the tracts of dry land can only be so many gibbosities on the terrestrial sphere. This is exactly the way in which modern experimentalists reason."

Stoppani, Ant.: *La Questione dell' Acqua e della Terra di Dante Alighieri*, in Giuliani's *Opere Latine di Dante*, Vol. II, pp. 451-62.

Schmidt, Wilh.: *Ueber Dante's Stellung in der Geschichte der Kosmographie*. Erster Theil. *Die Schrift, De Aqua et Terra*. Dissertation. Graz, 1876.

§ 7. THE ECLOGUES. — While Dante was at Ravenna, Giovanni del Virgilio, a celebrated professor of Latin literature at Bologna, invited him, in a Latin ode, to come to Bologna, praising him for his *Comedy*, but, at the same time, blaming him for having written it in the vulgar tongue. He then exhorted him to win the laurel by writing Latin poems, at the same time ingenuously suggesting subjects, and promising him favor, if he would follow this advice. Dante replied in a Latin eclogue, in which, under the allegorical name of Tityrus, he addressed him (Mopsus), telling him that he had received his ode while he was in company with Melibæus (Dino Pierini), reading over his own compositions; and, without entering into any literary discussion, courteously praised him for his poetical studies, adding that he disdained to accept the poetic crown at Bologna, because that city was opposed to the Empire, and that his sole desire was to bind his head with his country's laurel, when he should have published, in its



completeness, *The Comedy*, of which he promised soon to send him ten cantos.<sup>1</sup>

Mopsus (Giovanni) replied with another eclogue, recommending Dante for having sung in smooth verses, and encouraging him to set his mind at rest, and to cherish the hope of returning to his country, and seeing again his wife (Phyllis) and his home, at the same time urging him to come to Bologna, where the scholars were eagerly waiting for him, and where he would meet, among other persons, the poet Albertino Mussato. Dante replied in a second eclogue, saying that he disdained to go to Bologna, all the more that he feared Robert, King of Naples (Polyphemus).

In his two eclogues, Dante not only proved to his youthful admirer, who blamed him for writing poetry in the vulgar tongue, that, if he chose, he could also write in Latin verse, but he further resuscitated in literature bucolic poetry, which had been dead since the time of Virgil. Herein lies the chief importance of the two pretty and ingenious samples of Dante's great genius.

The Eclogues of Dante were first published in the collection, *Carmina Illustrum Poetarum*, Florence, 1719-27. They were republished, along with Giovanni del Virgilio's two missives, by Dionisi, in his *Aneddoti*, Verona, 1788. Among other editions, besides those of Fraticelli and Giuliani (see p. 187), we may mention these following : —

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[<sup>1</sup> That this last statement rests upon a misinterpretation of Dante's words, I have shown above. See p. 211, note.]

Orelli, Jo. Caspar: *Joannis de Virgilio et Dantis Aligerii Eclogae*. Zürich, 1839, 4to.

Scolari, Filippo: *I Versi Latini di Giovanni del Virgilio e di Dante Alighieri, recati in Versi Italiani ed illustrati col Testo a Fronte e con Note*. Venice, 1845, 8vo. With Appendix, Venice, 1847. Compare

Torri, Al.: *Cenni intorno a' Versi Latini di Giovanni del Virgilio e di Dante Alighieri, recati in Versi Italiani ed illustrati da Filippo Scolari*. Modena, 1846.<sup>1</sup>

Boccaccio says: "Dante composed two Eclogues, very beautiful, which were addressed and sent by him to Master Giovanni del Virgilio, in reply to certain verses sent him." Leonardo Bruni writes, "In verse he [Dante] wrote some Eclogues."

With regard to Giovanni del Virgilio, we know that he taught Latin literature in Bologna, his native city, from 1318 to 1325, and that he wrote a *Cronica del Regno Cattolico della Chiesa Romana*. On the other hand, we know nothing of how or when the friendship between him and Dante sprang up. Cf. Giuliani, G. B.: *Opere Latine di Dante Alighieri*, Vol. II, pp. 316 sqq.

§ 8. LETTERS. — Even without the testimony of contemporary writers, we might with certainty conclude that Dante must have written many letters, especially during the long years of his exile. He, brother, husband, and father; he, the friend of the famous men of his age; he, poet, *littérateur*, and statesman, poor and compelled to eat the bread that savors of salt, must,

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[<sup>1</sup> There does not exist any tolerable edition of the Eclogues, nor any correct interpretation of them. Of the gross blunders into which interpreters have fallen, I have given a specimen above, on p. 132, note 3.]

doubtless, have taken up his pen at least once a month, perhaps once a week, perhaps even oftener, to write, sometimes to his brother, sometimes to his wife, sometimes to his children, sometimes to his relatives, sometimes to his friends, and sometimes to other persons. That very many of the letters written by him should be lost to posterity was a thing but too natural, because, at all times, too common. Contemporaries do not, like posterity, regard as most precious relics the letters of a man whose greatness they neither know nor can appreciate. And Dante Alighieri was an exile, a poor man, condemned and accursed by his country! But, in spite of all this, it is a fact, no less strange than grievous, that so few of Dante's letters have come down to us. Still, if we reflect that his contemporary, Giovanni Villani, knew only three,<sup>1</sup> we ought rather to thank Fate for not allowing them all to go astray. If Villani knew but three, we possess six, the authenticity of which can scarcely be called seriously in question.

Of these six letters of Dante's, the *First* is addressed to the Princes and Peoples of Italy, exhorting them to be faithful and obedient to the new emperor, Henry of Luxemburg. The *Second*, dated the 31st March, 1311, is addressed to his fellow-citizens, whom he threatens with the vengeance of God and of the Emperor. The *Third* was written by Dante eighteen days later, on the

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[<sup>1</sup> This is incorrect. Villani says: "*Among others*, he wrote three noble letters" (Intra l' altre, fece tre nobili pistole).]



18th April, 1311,<sup>1</sup> to the Emperor, conjuring him, in prophetic language, to march, without delay, upon Florence. The *Fourth* is addressed to the Italian cardinals, assembled in conclave at Carpentras, exhorting them to elect an Italian pope. The *Fifth* is that written to a Florentine friend, in which the great exile magnanimously refused to accept the opprobrious pardon offered to him and his fellow-citizens. Finally, the *Sixth* is that in which Dante dedicated to Can Grande della Scala the opening cantos of his *Paradise*—a letter of the utmost value in aiding us to understand the conception of the *Sacred Poem* and the true method of interpreting it. All these letters are written in Latin, in a masculine and robust style, savoring somewhat of the rudeness of the age in which they were written.

The best editions of the Letters are those of Torri, Fraticelli, and Giuliani (see p. 187). These editors, however, were too sparing with their criticism, accepting, not only doubtful things, but also things manifestly spurious. Compare

Muzzi, Luigi: *Tre Epistole Latine di Dante Alighieri, annotate e tradotte. Con la Giunta di altre Cose relative al detto Poeta.* Prato, 1845, 8vo.

Giuliani, G. B.: *Dante spiegato con Dante. Metodo di commentare la Divina Commedia, dedotto dall' Epistola a Can-grande della Scala,* in *Opere Latine di Dante Alighieri*, Vol. II, pp. 241–285.

Torri, Al.: *Sulle Lettere di Dante.* In the “Etruria,” 1851, pp. 666–78. (Treats of the so-called “discovery of Dante’s Letters.”)

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[<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 96, note.]

[Witte, Karl: *Neu aufgefundenen Briefe Dante's*, in *Dante-Forschungen*, Vol. I, pp. 473-88.]

We shall quote, without note or comment, the testimonies of older writers regarding Dante's Letters.

Dante, *New Life* (Chap. xxxj), says: "When the most gentle lady had departed from this world, the above-named city was all widowed, as it were, and despoiled of all dignity; whereupon I, still weeping in this desolate city, wrote to the princes of the land something concerning its condition, borrowing for my opening the words of Jeremiah the Prophet: *Quomodo sedet sola civitas!*"

Giovanni Villani, in his *Cronica* (IX, 136), tells us: "He wrote, among others, three noble letters. One he sent to the government of Florence, complaining of his undeserved banishment; another he sent to the Emperor Henry, when he was at the siege of Brescia, upbraiding him for his delay, and almost prophesying; the third he sent to the Italian cardinals, at the time of the vacancy after the death of Pope Clement, begging them to agree in the election of an Italian pope. All were in Latin, written in a lofty style, with excellent views and authorities, which were much commended by men of ripe intelligence."

Boccaccio writes: "This worthy poet also wrote many prose Epistles in Latin, whereof a large number are still extant."

Lionardo Bruni has preserved for us the fragment of Dante's letter on the causes of his banishment, cited above [p. 74]. He affirms that Dante, during his exile, wrote several times, not only to individual citizens, but also to the people, and sent, among others, a very long letter, beginning, "*Popule mi, quid feci tibi?*" Elsewhere he says: "He (Dante) was, moreover, a perfect penman, and his writing was thin and tall, as I have seen it in some letters written with his own hand. In Latin he wrote many letters in prose."

Any one willing to place confidence in Giovan Maria Filelfo<sup>1</sup> might cite the opening lines of letters written by Dante to the King of Hungary, to Pope Boniface VIII, to his son, who was studying at Bologna, etc. But we need not trouble ourselves about an impostor like Filelfo.

Carlo Troya, in his *Del Veltro Allegorico di Dante* (p. 60), says: "In the middle of the fifteenth century there were still extant, at Forlì, a number of letters written by Dante to Pellegrino Calvi, secretary to Scarpetta degli Ordelaffi, from which it appeared that the Poet obtained from the Lord of Verona a body of cavalry and infantry to make an attack on Florence; but it is now vain to look for these letters at Forlì, where the papers of the Ordelaffi were burnt through unrighteous zeal." (Page 125.) "The fact of this new excursion of Dante's (into the Romagna) is attested by another letter written from Forlì to Cane della Scala, in the name of the Florentine exiles. Pellegrino Calvi, formerly secretary to Scarpetta Ordelaffi, made a copy of it with his own hand; but time has destroyed this, as well as many other things which Dante wrote in the service of his fellows."

§ 9. THINGS OF DOUBTFUL AUTHENTICITY AND THINGS SPURIOUS. — There pass under the name of Dante Alighieri several other compositions, some of which,—for example, certain lyrics,—may be authentic, whereas others have been attributed to him through the ignorance of copyists, while some have been forged by human perversity. Apart from a considerable number of sonnets, odes, and other lyrics, which are ascribed to Dante in ancient manuscripts, and with regard to whose

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[<sup>1</sup> See p. 8.]



authenticity or spuriousness it is often difficult, sometimes impossible, to form a judgment, there are several other things assigned to him which must be rejected as spurious. These are the so-called *Sacred Lyrics*, that is, *The Seven Penitential Psalms*, a miserable performance in *terza rima*,<sup>1</sup> the *Catholic Catechism*, or *The Profession of Faith*, an exposition in 247 terzines of the Creed, the Sacraments, the Commandments, the Deadly Sins, the Virtues, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ave Maria; the *Laud in Honor of Our Lady*; the *New Creed*; and other stuff of the same kind. Of doubtful authenticity are the letters to Cardinal Nicolò da Prato, Bishop of Ostia, and to the exile friend from Pistoia. Spurious are the letters to Counts Oberto and Guido of Romena, and the three which Dante is said to have written, in the name of Margaret, Duchess of Brabant, to her consort, the Emperor Henry VII;<sup>2</sup> foolish and absurd forg-

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[<sup>1</sup> It is instructive to compare with this Fraticelli's judgment: "I venture to affirm that . . . this translation deserves the preference over all the other translations of these psalms ever made, and they are not few. In this, more than in any other, simplicity and naturalness, combined with devotion and humility, appear diffused through the whole, as the blood through the body. At the same time we find, here and there, the expressions, the thoughts, the freedom of rhyme, and the peculiar characteristics of our translator; so much so that any one versed in his other poetry, without being told the name of the translator, could not help saying, 'This is Dante's work'" (*Op. Min. di Dante Alig.*, Vol. I, p. 332).]

[<sup>2</sup> The author is here in error. The letters are from the Countess Catherine of Battifolle, wife of Count Guido Selvatico of Poppi, to Margaret, wife of Henry VII. See Fraticelli, *Op. Min. di Dante Alig.*, Vol. III, p. 408; Giuliani, *Op. Lat. di Dante Alig.*, Vol. II, pp. 69 sqq. On the letter to the Counts Oberto and Guido, which most critics consider genu-

eries are the two letters to the Marquis Morovello Malaspina<sup>1</sup> and to Messer Guido da Polenta, Lord of Ravenna. No weight is to be attached to Giovan Maria Filelfo's assertion that Dante wrote a History of the Guelphs and Ghibellines in the vulgar tongue,—a history which never existed, and was never mentioned by any other writer.

To examine, one by one, the numerous lyrics attributed to Dante, and published under his name, would be a tedious task, and would in but few cases lead to any definite conclusion with respect to the authenticity or spuriousness of the different pieces. With regard to the so-called *Sacred Lyrics*, war enough has been waged, and it is of no use to waste more words upon them, although there are still some persons who believe in their authenticity. Of more importance is the question with regard to the letters attributed to Dante, those, namely, which we have placed among the things of doubtful authenticity, or among the things spurious and forged. A thorough-going, critical examination of the question would require a whole volume, and, of course, cannot be undertaken here. For this reason we must leave it in abeyance, at the risk of being once more charged with pronouncing judgments without proof, of peremptorily denying and condemning, merely because we suspect. But it is only a simple matter of course, that, in a note to a line of *The Comedy*, or in a small *Handbook* like the present, that,

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ine, see Karl Witte, *Dante und die Grafen Guidi*, in *Dante-Forschungen*, Vol. II, pp. 194-236.]

[<sup>1</sup> Cf. above, p. 230. It ought to be borne in mind that all the judgments of this section, except that on Filelfo, belong to that purely subjective class which the author has elsewhere (p. 234) so strongly and so justly condemned. The simple truth is, that we are not yet sufficiently acquainted with Dante's character to be able to say with certainty what he may, and what he may not, have written.]

while we may communicate the results of studious inquiries, we cannot recount all the steps by which they were reached. Moreover, there has been enough of discussion in regard to these letters, and we are saying nothing new in pronouncing them doubtful or spurious. Only one of them, that to Morovello Malaspina has been, and still is, considered authentic ; and yet, if there be one thing that is falsely attributed to Dante, this is that one. We shall show this at length, in another work. Here we shall simply say that there is nothing, absolutely nothing, among the things generally reckoned spurious, that stands in such open contradiction to the character of Dante as this same silly letter.<sup>1</sup>

On the lyrics attributed to Dante, see Fraticelli, P. : *Opere Minori di Dante Alig.*, Vol. I, pp. 219-328 ; Ferrazzi, G. J. : *Manuale Dantesco*, Vol. IV, pp. 475-79 ; Vol. V, pp. 507-9. The so-called *Sacred Lyrics* of Dante were published by Quadrio, Bologna, 1753 ; by P. Narbone, Palermo, 1831 ; by Fraticelli, in his edition of the *Minor Works*, etc. Other things of the same sort are the *Laud in Honor of Our Lady*, edited by A. Bonucci, Bologna, 1854 ; the *New Creed*, published by A. Mainardi, Mantua, 1871, etc.

As many lyrics really belonging to Dante are known, and many others are attributed to him, the editors of the *Book of Lyrics* exercise a certain amount of criticism ; whereas the letters are so few, that, in order not to strip Dante of correspondence altogether, science has been forced to leave him with all those attributed to him, and criticism has nothing at all to say. Hence all the Letters that pass under Dante's name are to be found in the best-known editions of the *Minor Works*, named above, p. 187.

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[<sup>1</sup> And yet it is considered genuine by three such profound Dante-scholars as Fraticelli, Giuliani, and Witte. So much for subjective criticism !]



## CHAPTER IV.

### THE COMEDY.

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§ 1. SOURCES. — Very narrow are the limits set to the human imagination in all cases. Even in the highest geniuses, it is less vast and powerful than hero-worshippers are wont to believe; and in all works of human genius, invention counts for more in form than in matter. Even Dante himself did not invent the whole of his subject, but drew it from all the sources which were accessible in his time, and which his vast and profound studies had disclosed. Already for centuries men's imaginations had been exerting themselves in order to picture and represent the state of the souls in the three kingdoms of eternity. Numerous, in the Middle Age, were the visions of one or another, or of all three, of the spiritual kingdoms, — visions, either monastic, with a purely æsthetic purpose, or satiric, with a political purpose. Although all these legendary visions stand infinitely below the vision of Dante, they, nevertheless, contain not a few passages and scenes bearing a certain affinity to passages and scenes in *The Comedy*; and we can hardly doubt that many of those legends, some of which were very popular in those times, were

known to Dante. This does not imply that he imitated any one of them: he simply followed the taste of the time, and drew from the popular consciousness of his age.

*The Comedy*, the poem to which heaven and earth put a hand,<sup>1</sup> the poem which embraces the entire knowledge of the time, was of necessity drawn from many sources. From the Holy Scriptures, from the writings of the Church Fathers, from the works of the Schoolmen and Mystics, Dante drew in part the symbolism which adorns his poem as well as the theological doctrines which are abundantly scattered through it. In Theology, his chief instructor was St. Thomas [Aquinas]; in Philosophy, Aristotle. Another abundant source from which he drew was ancient classic literature, the historic no less than the mythologic and poetic. He himself calls Virgil his master and inspirer,<sup>2</sup> and boasts that he knows the whole of the *Æneid*.<sup>3</sup> In fact, Virgil was his guide in writing *The Comedy*, just as he is made his guide on the mystic journey. Secondary guides were Ovid, Statius, Lucan, and other poets and authors,

[<sup>1</sup> *Parad.*, XXV, 2.]

[<sup>2</sup> Tu se' lo mio maestro e lo mio autore:

Tu se' solo colui, da cui io tolsi

Lo bello stile, che m' ha fatto onore.

— *Hell*, I, 85 sqq.]

[<sup>3</sup> Dell' Eneida dico; la qual mamma

Fummi, e fummi nutrice poetando;

Sanz' essa non fermai peso di dramma.

— *Purg.*, XXI, 97 sqq.]

among whom we must not forget Cicero and Boëthius.<sup>1</sup> But the source from which he drew most largely was his direct study of men, their history, character, and customs, aided by the steady and patient observation of Nature and her phenomena. Hence those many touching episodes, derived solely from his own experience and observation; hence the abundance of splendid similes, invented by the Poet, or, rather, read by him in the great book of Nature. Hence it is that the imperishable monument reared by Dante to Beatrice, — in spite of the fact that its subject was not new; that all the intellectual sciences contributed to it, physics, philosophy, theology; all the elements of universal life, history, politics, religion; all the forms of art, the lyric, the epic, and the dramatic; all the species of versification, hymn, satire, tragedy, comedy; although architecture with its order, sculpture with its relief, painting with its color, the music of speech with its sounds, contributed to its perfection, — turned out a poem as original as any human work can be, the most original perhaps of all the great poems ever composed by human genius.

See the works of Cancellieri, Villari, and D' Ancona, cited above (p. 167). From D' Ancona's admirable and important work we quote the following passage: —

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[<sup>1</sup> See p. 60. I have endeavored, in an essay on *The Teachers of Dante*, to treat this subject with something like exhaustiveness. That essay, which was read last year (1886) in the Concord Summer School of Philosophy, will soon be published either along with the other essays on Dante read there, or else separately. — *Translator*.]



"It would be a bold thing to affirm that any particular legend was the model which Dante had before him — the germ, so to speak, from which the whole poem was developed. Certain it is that these legends embodied a mass of concepts widely popular throughout Christendom. We might even go so far as to say that Dante drew less from them than he did directly from the popular consciousness which, having meditated on the subject, had come at last to fix the punishments due to certain sins, on the basis of what Dante called the 'law of *contrapass*' (retribution) ;<sup>1</sup> that is, correspondence between punishment and misdeed. The identity of the subject, therefore, has its ground in the opinions of the time ; that of the details may be either fortuitous or due to the nature of the subject, or even to tradition. In any case, that Dante, whose inspiration was backed by learning, and who shows profound interest in, and acquaintance with, everything, should have been entirely ignorant respecting these works, so similar in subject to his own poem, is something that we should not venture to assert ; and no person of understanding would deny that they are almost a necessary introduction to his poem. Even the Creator required chaos in order to create the world ; and the legends of visionaries are exactly the material of which the poem was composed. At the same time, before Dante, the subject was a *res nullius* ; it belonged to everybody and nobody. Dante, in appropriating it, put into it what his predecessors had been unable to put — what he alone possessed. For all the childish conceptions of monks, all the greedy impostures of politicians, all the grotesque

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[<sup>1</sup> Così s' osserva in me lo *contrappasso*. — *Hell*, XXVIII, 142.

*Contrappasso* (contra, pati) is the exact equivalent of the Greek ἀντιπεπονθός. See Aristotle, *Eth. Nic.*, V, 8; 1132<sup>b</sup>, 21. Thomas Aquinas uses the word *Contrapassum*, and writes a whole article on the question, *Utrum Iustum sit simpliciter idem quod Contrapassum*. *Sum. Theol.*, II<sup>2</sup>, quaest. lxi, art. 4.]

inventions of charlatans, he substituted the simple, vigorous creation of the poetic fancy, introducing unity, order, harmony, art, where there had formerly been but a confused heap of frightful facts and a stupid catalogue of marvels. Many had already tried to describe the pains of hell and the joys of heaven ; and it did not require a large stock of imagination to accumulate, in the description of the former, torments, writhings, fire, ice, pitch, brimstone, serpents, monsters, demons, and in that of the latter, delights and joys, light, perfumes, songs, and sounds ; but no one had thought of taking up that old, hackneyed theme and making it represent human life, in all its forms and vicissitudes, from the abyss of woe to the summit of felicity : moreover, no one had reflected that the accounts of so many miseries and so many delights at last weary the reader, leaving him stunned rather than satisfied, and that, in order to restore life to such a subject, man must be introduced into it, not man in general, not the impersonal soul, but the individual man, with his name, his character, his lot in the world and in history. Dante, in treating this threadbare subject with such precaution, impressed upon it indelibly his own mark ; and so, after him, the cycle of visions comes to an end. Those that had gone before sank into oblivion, and are brought to light only by modern criticism, which laboriously investigates the first origin of all great works of art ; but, whether we will or not, in the human imagination, the three realms of punishment, purgation, and reward stand constructed forever, as Dante represents them, and as art has repeated them under his guidance. After him, there was no more to say ; and so, the last visionaries unconsciously plagiarize Dante, and Judge Armannino, paraphrasing the *Æneid*, mingles Dantesque with Virgilian images in the description of Tartarus and Elysium. *The Divine Comedy* becomes the book at once of the common people and of theologians ; and, if the women of Ravenna, on seeing the

Poet pass, silent and with introverted look, pointed him out in terror to their children, as the man who had come back from Satan's gloomy realm,<sup>1</sup> yet the poem will very soon be read and expounded in the churches; the religious brotherhoods will place it among their books of devotion, and *The Comedy* will receive the title of *Divine*, which it will never lose, as if Dante had been the most trustworthy revealer of the glories of heaven, and had descended therefrom;<sup>2</sup> but for men of sane intellect he is, in very deed, the man who attained the sublimest heights of regenerated art." [*I Precursori di Dante*, pp. 107-112.]

The longest and most popular legends of the Middle Age, those which have been called true sketches and forecasts of Dante's poem, are:—

(1) *The Vision of St. Paul* (see Villari, P.: *Saggi di Storia, di Critica e di Politica*, p. 140; Ozanam, A. F.: *Dante et la Philosophie Catholique au XIII<sup>ième</sup> Siècle*, pp. 413 sqq.).

(2) *The Voyage of St. Brandan* (see Villari, *ut sup.*, p. 135 sq.; Schröder: *Sanct Brandan*, Erlangen, 1872).

(3) *The Vision of Tundalus* (Villari, *ut sup.*, p. 139; Schade: *Visio Tundali*, Halle, 1869; Mussafia, Ad.: *Appunti sulla Visione di Tundalo*, Vienna, 1871).

(4) *The Purgatory of St. Patrick* (Villari, *ut sup.*, pp. 137 sqq.; D'Ancona, Al., *I Precursori di Dante*, p. 59, n.).

(5) *The Vision of Fra Alberico* ([Villari, *ut sup.*, pp. 95, 140 sqq.; D'Ancona, *ut sup.*, pp. 63 sqq.] Printed in De Romanis' edition of *The Comedy*, Rome, 1815-17, 4to, Vol. IV, pp. 117-44, and again in the editions of the Minerva, of Ciardetti, etc.).

[(6) *The Vision of Wettin*, turned into Latin hexameters by Walafrid Strabo (*De Visionibus Wettini*, printed in Canisius,

[<sup>1</sup> See Geibel's beautiful poem, *Einsam durch Verona's Gassen wandelt' einst der grosse Dante.*]

[<sup>2</sup> Cf. Michelangelo's magnificent sonnet, beginning, *Dal ciel discese.*]



*Lectiones Antiquæ*, Vol. II, pp. 212 sqq.; and in Mabillon, *Acta ss. Ord. Sancti Benedicti*, Vol. V. See Dunham, S. A.: *History of the Germanic Empire*, in Lardner's *Cabinet Cyclopædia*, Vol. II, pp. 110 sqq.)] Compare

Wright, Thomas: *St. Patrick's Purgatory. An Essay on the Legends of Purgatory, Hell, and Paradise current during the Middle Ages*. London, 1844.

Labitte: *La Divine Comédie avant Dante*, in the *Revue des deux Mondes*, IVth Series (1842) No. xxxj, pp. 704-42, reprinted in the various editions of Brizeux's translation of *The Divine Comedy*.

Ampère, J. J.: *Les Visions qui ont préparé la Divine Comédie*, in the *Histoire littéraire de la France avant le XII<sup>ième</sup> Siècle*. Paris, 1833; Vol. II, p. 136; II, 365 sqq.

Ozanam, A. F.: *Des Sources poétiques de la Divine Comédie*, in *Dante et la Philosophie Catholique au XIII<sup>ième</sup> Siècle*. Paris, 1845, pp. 324-424.<sup>1</sup>

With regard to the title of the poem, Dante (Letter to Can Grande, § 10) thus expresses himself: "The title of the book is, *Here begins the Comedy of Dante Alighieri, Florentine by Nature, not by Character*. To understand this, it is necessary to know that *Comedy*, derived from *comos* (villa) and *oda* (song), means about the same thing as village song. And Comedy is a certain kind of poetic narration, different from every other. As to the matter, it differs from *Tragedy*, because the latter is, in the beginning, admirable and quiet; at the end or close, foul and horrible. . . . Whereas *Comedy* begins with adversity in something, but its matter ends prosperously. . . . Similarly, *Tragedy* and *Comedy* differ in style; the one being lofty and sublime, the other unstudied and ordinary. . . . Whence it is plain why this work is called a *Comedy*. For, if

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[<sup>1</sup> Cf. Longfellow's Translation of *The Divine Comedy*, Vol. I, pp. 438 sqq.]

we look at the matter : in the beginning, it is horrible and foul, because it is *Hell*; in the end, it is prosperous, desirable, and grateful, because it is *Paradise*. If we look at the style, it is unstudied and ordinary, because it is in the vulgar tongue, in which even ordinary women speak to each other." Compare

De' Rossetti, Dom. : *Perchè Divina Commedia si appelli il Poema di Dante*. Milan, 1819, 8vo.

Dante called his poem simply *The Comedy* (cf. *Hell*, XVI, 128 ;<sup>1</sup> XXI, 2<sup>2</sup>), and so, or else briefly, *Dante*, the older writers named it. The epithet *Divine* was first given to it in Dolce's edition, Venice, Giolito, 1555, after Landino, in the edition of 1481, had called the Poet *divine*. Settembrini [Luigi], in his *Lezioni di Letteratura Italiana* (Vol. I, p. 103), says : "*Divine Comedy* means *Sacred Representation*, something like those mediæval representations called *Mysteries*. And it is called *divine*, because its scene is laid in a supernatural world, which religious tradition had drawn and divided into three parts ; and it is called a *Comedy*, which means *popular representation*, because it is written in the vulgar tongue, in contradistinction to Virgil's Latin poem, which is called a Tragedy (cf. *Hell*, XX, 113<sup>3</sup>). The Poet also called it a *Sacred Poem* [*Parad.*, XXV, 1 ; see p. 132, note 1], and by the word 'poem' he meant to say that the representation of the world was made by art." See also Boccaccio, in the *Proem* to his *Commentary*, Ed. Milanese, Vol. I, pp. 82 sqq.

[<sup>1</sup> E per le note  
Di questa Commedia, lettor, ti giuro.]

[<sup>2</sup> Così di ponte in ponte, altro parlando  
Che la mia Commedia cantar non cura  
Venimmo.]

[<sup>3</sup> Euripide ebbe nome, e così il canta  
L' alta mia Tragedia, in alcun loco.]

§ 2. FORM. — Dante's *Comedy* being a work of the highest art, we must, first of all, observe its construction, both the "beautiful lie"<sup>1</sup> under which the Poet was pleased to hide the truths which he desired to teach, and the poetic form of the whole and the parts. *The Comedy*, then, in its literal sense, is the account of an ecstatic journey, taken by the Poet through the three Kingdoms of Damnation, Purification, and Bliss. The protagonist is the Poet himself who, fleeing from the horrors and dangers of a frightful forest, into which he had entered when "full of sleep," and in which he had lost himself, undertakes, guided first by the shade of Virgil, and, subsequently, by the glorified Beatrice, the downward voyage, descending through the various circles of hell to the centre of the earth; then upwards, ascending from the centre of the earth to its surface, and then, further, up through the circles of the Mount of Purification, to the heights of the Earthly Paradise, and, finally, thence, through the nine heavens, to the highest Empyrean, where his journey terminates with the beatific vision of God. During this journey, which, in the Kingdom of Damnation, is not without peril, and, in that of Purification, not without fatigue, the Poet sees the various eternal and temporary punishments, as well as the various degrees of celestial bliss. Sometimes he converses with Virgil, who instructs him in those things which may be known through human

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[<sup>1</sup> *Feast*, II, 1.]



reason; sometimes with Beatrice, who indoctrinates him regarding the mysteries of religion and faith; sometimes with the various spirits of the three kingdoms, who relate to him their own histories and those of their families, their friends or enemies, and their countries, and occasionally prophesy to the Poet his future fortune, that of his country, etc. He has visions, some of them revealing to him his own individual history; others, the universal history of the world and of the church of Christ.

The Kingdoms of Eternity being three in number, the poem is divided into three parts, or *Canticles*,—*Hell*, *Purgatory*, and *Paradise*. Each canticle consists of thirty-three cantos: to the first is prefixed a canto which serves as an introduction to the whole poem, so that the whole poem is comprised in a hundred cantos, the square of ten, which, according to Dante, is the perfect number. The hundred cantos contain 14,233 lines. The *Hell* contains 4720; the *Purgatory*, 4755; the *Paradise*, 4758. The geometry of the poem, therefore, had been carefully studied; so carefully, indeed, that in one place Dante leaves off writing before he has finished his theme, in order not to disturb it (*Purg.* XXXIII, 136 sqq.<sup>1</sup>). The hundred cantos, written in *terza rima*, vary in the number of their lines. The shortest two

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[<sup>1</sup> S' io avessi, lettor, più lungo spazio  
 Da scrivere, io pur cantere' in parte  
 Lo dolce ber che mai non m' avria sazio;  
 Ma perchè piene son tutte le carte  
 Ordite a questa Cantica seconda,  
 Non mi lascia più ir lo fren dell' arte.]

have each 115; the longest has 160. Everything in this vast poem, down even to the minutest particulars, is proportioned, calculated, weighed, with the most perfect exactness. In all cases the style is suited to the matter. Sometimes it is strong and harsh; sometimes soft and sweet; sometimes it is like a torrent rushing down from a height with great noise; sometimes it resembles the gentle gurgling of the rivulet that quietly flows through flowery meadows. Sometimes it is a boisterous wind, sometimes a soft zephyr. Sometimes it is the hideous, despairing yell of demons and of lost souls; sometimes the music of the harps of angels and the hymns of the Blest. At the same time, it must be confessed that there is no lack of passages in which the Poet, conforming to the custom of his time, puts into verse dry scholastic questions; but even in these passages, we find manifested the loftiness of his genius, which makes the deserts reclothe themselves with verdure and flowers, and breathes new life into dry bones.

In his letter to Can Grande (§§ 8, 9), Dante says: "The subject of the whole work, according to the letter, is the state of souls after death, taken simply. For from that, and about that, the whole evolution of the work moves. . . . But the form is twofold, the form of the treatise and the form of the treatment. The form of the treatise is threefold, corresponding to the three divisions. The first of these is the form of the whole work, which is in three canticles; the second is the form of the different canticles, which are in cantos; the third is the form of the cantos, which are in rhythms. The form or mode of

treatment is poetic, fictitious, descriptive, digressive, transumptive, and, further, definitive, divisive, probative, reprobative, and exemplificative" (*exemplorum positivus*).

On the Geometry of *The Comedy*, see Mariotti, Fil.: *Dante e la Statistica delle Lingue*. Florence, 1880, 12mo.

§ 3. CONCEPTION. — But the account of the journey through the three Kingdoms of the Dead, the description of the condition of the souls in Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise, is but the outer rind, the allegoric vestment, in which the Poet has chosen to clothe his conception. This conception is at once religious and political. The Poet's aim is to withdraw from the state of external and internal (spiritual) misery those who live in the present life, and to guide them to a state of bliss in the present life and in the eternal life which is to come. Therefore, *The Comedy* is, in one word, the great epopœa of the civil and political regeneration of the nations, and of the redemption of sinful man.

Deprived of the two guides which he requires in order to reach the two ends appointed for him by divine Providence, man loses himself in the dark forest of a restless, vicious life; and, when he wishes to escape from it, he is prevented by the vices prevailing in the world<sup>1</sup> — fleshly concupiscence, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, which stand in the way of his attaining spiritual happiness. He is likewise impeded by factions which render impossible the attainment of happiness in this

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[<sup>1</sup> See note on p. 225.]



life. Thus, but for the aid of Heaven, man would necessarily perish, because, even though he desire to save himself, he enters upon "a way that is not true." But Divine Grace benignly sends him its aids — a guide who, by philosophic teaching, directs him on the path of temporal felicity, and a guide who, according to revelation, directs him on the path of spiritual felicity. The path to be followed, in order to attain this double felicity, leads, in the first place to a consideration of sin, its nature and consequences, thence to purification, by means of penitence and acts of virtue, and, finally, to the elevation of the soul to the contemplation of things eternal and divine. Hence, the first Canticle of *The Comedy* deals with sins, signified by the punishments to which the wicked, by a just judgment, must be subject in time and in eternity. In the second Canticle, we are shown how sinful man is reconciled with God, to what forms of penitence he must resort, in order to complete his purification, in what acts of virtue he must exercise himself, in order to prepare himself for the life of contemplation, and to render himself worthy of participating in the eternal rewards. Finally, the third Canticle treats of those sublime virtues which enable men to enjoy a foretaste of the peace of heaven, and to secure its eternal possession from Divine Justice. Compare

Giuliani, G. B. : *Opere Latine di Dante*, Vol. II, pp. 105 sqq.

With all its universality, which embraces life in time and in eternity, *The Comedy* contains also an individual

element. In his own history, Dante relates the history of sinful man, who, aided by Divine Grace, abandons sin, repents, and gradually rises to the contemplation and fruition of the Supreme Good. But it is his own history that the Poet relates in the first instance.<sup>1</sup> Following a false school, the Poet had abandoned the true way and had lost himself. In the year of the Jubilee he awoke again, and made his first attempt to lead a changed life. In vain : the way by which he thought to attain happiness and to find peace, was not the true one, because it was a worldly way. In his efforts he is obstructed by the prevailing vices, to such an extent that he is on the point of relinquishing the attempt.

Finally, Divine Grace comes to his aid. He considers the sins of men, repents, and rises to the contemplation of heavenly things. By his own example, Dante shows us how the sinner must be renewed, and how he may attain peace in time and in eternity.

All the ancient commentators agree in the view that the fundamental conception of the poem is essentially religious. And Dante himself, in the letter to Can Grande (§ 11), had said that the subject of the whole allegory of the work is "man, in so far as, through free choice, through merit and demerit, he is subject to rewarding and punishing justice"; and that the purpose of the whole is "to withdraw from a state of misery those who live in the present life, and to guide them to the state of bliss" (*ibid.*, § 15).

In the present century there has arisen a new school, whose

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[<sup>1</sup> Compare above, p. 225, and note.]

beginning dates back to the last decades of the past century, — a school which tries to show that the conception of *The Comedy* is not moral and religious, but political ; asserting that the poem is not the epopœa of the salvation of nations and individuals, but the epopœa of Ghibellinism. By this method they have succeeded in transforming the Poet of Righteousness into the Apostle of Revolution, and in making the *Sacred Poem* the Bible of Revolutionaries. Just as the various religious sects have tried, and still try, to find their own religious views in the Bible, so the different political and social parties have read into *The Comedy* their own individual political and social views. This school, moreover, has found adherents, not only in Italy, but also in France, where Dante has been proclaimed a heretic, a revolutionist, and a socialist, and his *Comedy* declared to be the imperial song against the Pope.<sup>1</sup>

Although now in its decline, this school still has its adherents. In spite of its exaggerations and extravagances, it has contributed its share to the true understanding of the poem. Indeed, the fact that, alongside the moral and religious element in the *Sacred Poem*, there is in it also a political element, had been too much overlooked by all the older writers, as well as by some of the more recent ones. To deny this, would be “to run in the teeth of fate” (*Hell*, IX, 97). The Poet’s purpose was not merely the happiness of life eternal, but also happiness in this life ; not merely the redemption of the individual, but also the civil and political regeneration and welfare of the nations. In

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[<sup>1</sup> The leader of this school was Gabriel Rossetti, who, in 1826, published his famous *Comento Analitico* to *The Comedy*. His views having been attacked, he defended himself in a work, *Sullo Spirito antipapale che produsse la Reforma e sulla Influenza che esercitò nella Letteratura di tutta l’ Europa, e principalmente d’ Italia* (1830). See

Hallam, Arthur Henry: *Remains in Prose and Verse*. London, 1862.

Witte, Karl: *Rossetti’s Dante-Erklärung*, in *Dante-Forschungen*, Vol. I, pp. 96–133.]



another work, he tells us that the Earthly Paradise foreshadows the happiness of this life ; the Heavenly Paradise, the bliss of life eternal ; that, to reach the former, we require the Emperor ; to reach the latter, the Pope (*De Monarchia*, II, 15, cf. above, p. 252). Now, in *The Divine Comedy*, we have both paradises, the earthly and the heavenly ; we have two guides, one leading man to the Earthly Paradise, the other leading him to the Heavenly. Hence, we must, in all reason, apply Dante's thought-system to *The Comedy*, and make Dante his own interpreter. If we do this, we shall find that, in *The Comedy*, Dante shows how, under the direction of the imperial authority, which guides him by the teachings of philosophy, man arrives at happiness in this life, — a happiness which consists in the exercise of native virtue ; and, further, how, under the direction of the ecclesiastical authority, which guides him according to revelation, he attains to the bliss of life eternal, which consists in the enjoyment of the Vision of God. Hence, both interpretations — on the one hand, the moral and religious, on the other, the political — are true ; but each contains only half the truth. The whole truth lies in the union of the two views.

After all that we have said in the course of this little work, it hardly seems necessary to spend more words on the personal and individual element in *The Comedy*. On the Conception of the Poem, see

Bernardelli, Franc.: *Il Concetto della Divina Commedia di Dante Alighieri*. A Demonstration. Naples, 1859, 12mo.

Barelli, Vinc.: *L' Allegoria della Divina Commedia*. Florence, 1854, 12mo.

Delff, H. K. Hugo: *Die Idee der Göttlichen Komödie*. Leipzig, 1871, 8vo. [Also, *Dante Alighieri und die Göttliche Komödie*. Leipzig, 1869.]

Graziani, G.: *Interpretazione della Allegoria della Divina Commedia*. Bologna, 1871, 8vo.

Labruzzi di Nexima, Franc.: *Nuovo Commento sopra la principale Allegoria del Poema di Dante*. Rome, 1871, 8vo.

Bernardelli, Franc.: *Il Dominio temporale dei Papi nel Concetto politico di Dante Alighieri. Con un' Appendice sul vero Senso della Divina Commedia*. Modena, 1881, 16mo. (This recent work of the reverend Father is very important, in spite of its title.)

[Blow, Susan E.: *A Study of Dante*. With an Introduction by W. T. Harris. New York and London, 1886.

Fiorentino, Fr.: *Dell' Armonia del Concetto di Dante, come Filosofo, come Storico, come Statista, in Scritti Varii di Letteratura, Filosofia e Critica*. Naples, 1876.]

§ 4. SYMBOLISM. — Being an allegorical poem, *The Comedy* is necessarily full of symbols and symbolic actions. Not all, but a large number of the persons who appear upon the scene, and, among them, the principal ones, have a double meaning, the one, historical, the other, symbolic. But even the very large number of personages who stand in no immediate relation to the principal action of the poem, and who appear to have been introduced merely for the sake of poetic ornament, have a symbolic meaning, in that they represent whole classes of sinners, penitents, or saints. So, likewise, the personages whom we may call fantastic are symbolic, — the demons in Hell, the angels in Purgatory and Paradise, the animals which the Poet sees on his mystic journey. And, as the principal action of the poem is symbolic, so many, perhaps even all, of the subordinate actions are symbolic.

The sources from which Dante drew his symbolism are, (1) the Bible; (2) the Church Fathers; (3) the Schoolmen and, above all, the Mystics, of the Middle Age; (4) Classical Mythology. In part, however, this symbolism is the original, spontaneous creation of the Poet's fancy.

The key to the right understanding of *The Comedy* is the fundamental allegory contained in the first two cantos of the first Canticle. The dark forest, the direct way, the Poet's sleep, the valley, the hill and the Delectable Mountain, the sun which illuminates that hill, the desert track, the three wild beasts, Virgil, the other path which the Poet must follow, the Greyhound (*Veltro*), the three ladies in heaven, are symbols which here appear upon the scene and must be understood by any one who wishes to arrive at an understanding of the poem. Other important symbols appearing in the course of the poem are the following:— in the *Hell*, Minos, the other infernal demons, the three Furies, the heavenly messenger, the Harpies, the Old Man of Crete, the infernal rivers, the cord with which Dante was girt, the giants, the three sinners in the jaws of Satan; in the *Purgatory*, the four stars, Cato, the Pleasant Valley, the serpent, the eagle, Lucia, Statius, the trees of the sixth circle, Matelda, etc. The symbolism reaches its height in the vision of the Earthly Paradise, which occupies the concluding cantos of the second Canticle: here all is symbolical and allegorical, — the place, no less than the personages and the actions. Next to the allegory which



stands at the head of *The Comedy*, the allegory in the last cantos of the *Purgatory* is of capital importance for the understanding of the poem. In the *Paradise*, the symbols are fewer, perhaps because all is symbol. Among the principal may be reckoned the eagle formed by the blessed spirits, the cross in Mars, the river of light, and the celestial rose.

To the symbolism is due the chief obscurity of the poem. Although some of the symbols are easy of interpretation, and others are explained by Dante himself, *e.g.*, Virgil and Beatrice, a considerable number are so obscure and so hard to interpret correctly, that no interpreter of sense could flatter himself that he had in all cases hit the truth. And the difficulty is now all the greater, because several symbols have been drowned in a sea of different and contradictory interpretations, each pretending to be the only true one.

An interpretation of the symbols of *The Divine Comedy* would be a long task, especially as we should, of necessity, be obliged to examine all the interpretations hitherto proposed. And how many interpretations, for example, are there of the "firm foot" (*Hell*, I, 30), the three wild beasts, the *Greyhound*? The student may refer to the various commentaries; he may, likewise, consult the following works:—

#### 1. *On Beatrice.*

Puccianti, Gius.: *Allegoria di Beatrice*, in *Dante e il suo Secolo*, pp. 159-79.

Frigeri, Inn.: *Significato della Beatrice di Dante in Relazione ad altri Simboli del sacro Poema*, in the *Albo Dantesco Mantovano*. Mantua, 1865, pp. 59-77.

Perez, Fr.: *La Beatrice svelata. Preparazione all' Intelligenza di tutte le Opere di Dante.* Palermo, 1865.

Tancredi, Gius.: *La Beatrice dell' Alighieri nel Tipo religioso ed artistico.* Rome, 1875.

Galanti, Carm.: *Beatrice è il Simbolo della Rivelazione.* Ripatransone, 1875, 2d edit., 1881.

De Guidobaldi, Dom.: *La Beatrice di Dante è la Rivelazione ovvero la Teologia.* Naples, 1876.

Galanti, Carm.: *Lettere IX su Dante.* Ripatransone, 1876.

## [2. *On the Firm Foot.*

Tommasèo, Nicolò: *Nuovi Studi su Dante.* Turin, 1865, pp. 291-315, 317-18.]

## 3. *On Virgil.*

Comparetti, D.: *Virgilio nel Medio Evo.* Leghorn, 1872, 2 vols.

Jacob, Joh.: *Die Bedeutung der Führer Dante's in der Divina Commedia.* Leipzig, 1874.

[Villari, P.: *Dante e la Letteratura in Italia*, in *Saggi di Storia, di Critica e di Politica.* Florence, 1868, 8vo, pp. 145-56.]

## 4. *The Three Wild Beasts.*

Bongiovanni, Dom.: *La Lonza, il Leone e la Lupa*, in the work, *Prolegomeni al Nuovo Commento della Divina Commedia.* Forlì, 1858, pp. 275-324.

Picchioni, L.: *La Lupa nella Divina Commedia.* Basle, 1869.

Calvori, I.: *La Selva, le Belve e le tre Donne della Divina Commedia. Idea di un nuovo Commento esposto in due Discorsi.* Torino, 1873.

## 5. *The Greyhound.*

Scartazzini, G. A.: *Il Cinquecento Dieci e Cinque*, in his *Commentary to the Comedy*, Vol. II, pp. 801-17. (Contains a list of the very numerous works on the too famous *Greyhound*.)

6. *Lucia.*

Bastiani, L.: *L' Aquila e la Lucia nella Divina Commedia.* Naples, 1870.

Galanti, Carm.: *Lucia è Simbolo della Chiesa.* No. VI of *Lettere IX su Dante Alighieri.* Ripatransone, 1876.

Grion, G.: *La Lucia di Dante.* Verona, 1871.

Fornaciari, Raf.: *Sul Significato allegorico della Lucia di Dante Alighieri.* A Lecture. Lucca, 1873.

7. *The "Gentle Lady."*

Galanti, Carm.: *La Donna Gentile è Maria.* No. VII of *Lettere IX su Dante Alighieri.* Ripatransone, 1876.

8. *The Medusa.*

Galanti, C.: *L' Allegoria Dantesca del Capo di Medusa,* in *Lettere su Dante*, Ser. II, Lett. III and IV. Ripatransone, 1882.

Negroni, C.: *L' Allegoria Dantesca del Capo di Medusa.* Bologna, 1882.

9. *Matelda.*

Scartazzini, G. A.: *La Matelda di Dante*, in his *Commentary on The Comedy*, Vol. II, pp. 595-617. (Gives a list of all the works and all the opinions on Dante's Matelda.)

10. *The Tree in the Earthly Paradise.*

Galanti, Carm.: *Sull' Albero nella Vetta della Montagna del Purgatorio Dantesco, in Relazione con i tre Regni*, in *Lettere su Dante*, Ser. I, Lett. XXIX-XXXI. Ripatransone, 1880.

11. *The Eagle.*

Bastiani, S.: *L' Aquila della Vittoria e del Diritto nella Divina Commedia.* Naples, 1874.

Bastiani, L.: *Della Storia delle due Aquile a spiegare alcune Allegorie della Divina Commedia.* Naples, 1874.



§ 5. TOPOGRAPHY.—The Schoolmen were much occupied with the question regarding the situation of the three kingdoms of eternity, and they came very near leaving us a plan and a map of them. They held Hell and Purgatory to be in the gloomy regions underground. They divided these regions into the following four receptacles : (1) *Hell*, properly so-called, the abode of the devils and the damned ; (2) *Purgatory*, the place of penance, situated near Hell and adjacent to it ; (3) the *Infants' Limbo*, the place of little children who died without baptism ; (4) the *Fathers' Limbo*, called also *Abraham's Bosom*, the abode of the righteous who died before the coming of Christianity. The heavens they divided into (1) the *Visible Heaven* or firmament ; (2) the *Spiritual Heaven*, the abode of the angels and saints ; and (3) the *Intellectual Heaven*, where the Blest enjoy the vision of the Triune God.

Dante, in his poem, did not adhere to this scholastic topography, but created one of his own. He turned the two Limbos into one, forming the first and uppermost circle of Hell. Above Limbo, he created a vestibule, where he put the cowards, displeasing to God and to his enemies, — a crowd whom God will not admit to his heaven, nor the devils to their hell. *Hell*, a great gulf, extending from the surface of the inhabited hemisphere, and gradually narrowing down to the centre of the earth, is divided into nine circles, of which the seventh is subdivided into three smaller circles ; the eighth, into ten pits (*bolge*) ; and the ninth, horizontally, into

four partitions. In the middle is Lucifer, bound to the central point of the earth and of Hell, with his head in one hemisphere, and his feet in the other.

The earth has one hemisphere inhabited, and in the midst of this stands Jerusalem. The other hemisphere is uninhabited, and has been covered with water, since Lucifer, hurled from heaven, fell upon it. The reason of this is, that, on that side, the earth, for fear of him, "veiled itself with the sea," and protruded on the other side.<sup>1</sup> The fall of Lucifer opened the infernal pit, because the earth, in order to avoid him, here left the place open, and took refuge by rising up and forming the island and mountain of Purgatory, so that Jerusalem and Purgatory have the same horizon, but are in different hemispheres.

*Purgatory*, a mountain in the form of a truncated cone, rises in steps or ledges, which cut into the mountain and narrow toward the top, where is the divine forest of the Earthly Paradise. Purgatory likewise is divided into nine parts: the Antepurgatory, the seven ledges on which the seven deadly sins are purged away, and the Earthly Paradise.

*Paradise* is made up of the nine heavens of (1) the Moon, (2) Mercury, (3) Venus, (4) the Sun, (5) Mars,

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[<sup>1</sup> E la terra che pria di qua si sporse  
Per paura di lui fe' del mar velo,  
E venne all' emisferio nostro; e forse  
Per fuggir lui lasciò qui il loco voto.

— *Hell*, XXXIV, 122 sqq.]

(6) Jupiter, (7) Saturn, (8) the Fixed Stars, (9) the *Primum Mobile*, which revolve round the immovable earth, as a centre, and are contained within the Empyrean or tenth heaven, which is immovable. In this quiet heaven, the Blest have their abodes, in the form of the petals of a white rose, and enjoy the beatific vision of God, who is surrounded by the nine orders of the three angelic Hierarchies.

If, in many things, as, for example, in placing Limbo alongside Hell, and both in the bowels of the earth; in the number of the heavens and the order of the planets, Dante followed the notions of his time, in other things which are of great importance to the poem, he is an inventor and creator. He introduced order and system into his Hell, constructing it architecturally, and dividing it up into circles corresponding to his systematic classification of sins. The story of the origin of the infernal pit, and of the natural shaft by which he ascends from the centre of the earth to the other hemisphere, is a poetic invention of his own, and a stroke of genius. And, while all his contemporaries placed Purgatory, as well as Hell, in a dismal place in the bowels of the earth, Dante created a more pleasant and cheerful Purgatory, and placed on its summit that Earthly Paradise which others went in quest of to the eastern regions of our hemisphere. In the topographical arrangement of the three spiritual kingdoms, likewise, the sublime genius of the Poet manifests itself. He appropriates, indeed, the ideas of his time; but he gives them an en-



tirely new form, recasts them, and impresses his own seal upon them.

From the fifteenth century on, many persons have tried their hand at illustrating, with pen or pencil, Dante's topography of the three spiritual kingdoms. One of the most useful works of this kind is

Caetani, Michelangelo [Duke of Sermoneta]: *La Materia della Divina Commedia, dichiarata in sei Tavole*. Rome, 1865, 1872, 1882, fol. Compare

Manetti, Ant.: *Dialogo circa al Sito, Forma e Misure dello Inferno di Dante*. Florence, 1506.

Giambullari, Pierfranc.: *Del Sito, Forma e Misura dello Inferno di Dante*. Florence, 1544, 8vo. Also, *Del Sito del Purgatorio*, in his *Lezioni*. Florence, 1551, pp. 41-51.

Galilei, Galileo: *Lezioni intorno la Figura, Sito e Grandezza dell' Inferno di Dante*, in his *Studi della Divina Commedia*. Edit. O. Gigli. Florence, 1855, pp. 1-39.

Ponta, M. G.: *Opere su Dante*. Novi, 1846.

Gregoretti, Fr.: Four tables representing, on a large scale, Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise. Venice, 1865.

[Witte, Karl: *Dante's Weltgebäude*, in *Dante-Forschungen*, Vol. II, pp. 161-82.]

§ 6. HELL, THE KINGDOM OF DAMNATION.—Rescued from the horrors of the dark forest, and instructed in the way which he must go, in order to reach the Delectable Mountain, Dante, guided by Virgil, enters the first circle of Hell, by a gate over which he sees words written in a dark color, traverses a great part of it, comes to Limbo, and enters a noble castle. Thence he descends to circle after circle, always advancing toward the left,

till he comes to the fifth circle, where he is carried across by Phlegyas from one bank of the Styx to the other, and set down at the gate of Dis. He enters the city, and, near the overhanging cliffs, goes in search of the coffins on the right, for some distance; then he turns back and keeps henceforth always to the left. Then he descends with Nessus to the first round of the first sub-circle, and traverses the second and third rounds for a long distance. On the brink of the last, he places himself on the back of Geryon, who carries him down a long descent to the bottom, that is, to the second sub-circle, which is Malebolge. Here he walks on the embankment of the first pit, still toward the left, and, in order to look in, turns back a little. Then, continuing his journey forward, he arrives at the first foot-bridge, passes it, and finds himself on the embankment of the second pit. In like manner he crosses the second and third bridges, and then descends into the third pit. From this he ascends to the fourth embankment, and, passing the fourth and fifth bridges, reaches the sixth embankment. He finds all the bridges of the sixth pit broken down; wherefore, he descends to the bottom, and ascends again, with great difficulty, to the seventh embankment. Then he crosses the seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth bridges, advancing toward the extreme internal limits of Malebolge, where an angel takes him up and carries him over into the third sub-circle. Here he traverses the four concentric abodes of the traitors, fixed firm in ice, and approaches Lucifer. In the arm

of Virgil, who lays hold of Lucifer's hair, he passes the centre of the earth, and climbs up, by a natural shaft, to the other hemisphere.

Caetani, Michelangelo : *La Materia della Divina Commedia*.  
Prol. Explanation of the third Table.

In the course of this journey, the Poet sees, everywhere in the infernal regions, crowds of souls, who display to him all the native ugliness of all the sins into which man falls, when he turns aside from the right path, and walks in the wrong one, and the moral effects of these sins, as shown in the various punishments. In the vestibule he sees the cowards, who lived without infamy and without praise. They wail loudly, have no hope of death, and envy every other lot. Among them he recognizes only him "who, through cowardice, made the great refusal." Then come those who had not faith, and the infants who died without baptism, whose punishment is simply privation : they live in desire without hope. Among these he sees the famous poets, philosophers, and heroes of antiquity ; and the first make him one of their number. Then follow those who sinned through incontinence, — the luxurious, the gluttonous, the avaricious, and the prodigal, the unconcerned, the wrathful, the envious, and the proud. The luxurious are incessantly driven by a hurricane and beaten against a ruin. Dante stops to converse with Francesca da Rimini, who tells him the sad and touching story of her unhappy love and tragic end. The glutton-



ous, among whom is the Florentine Ciacco, are pelted with rain and hail, and bitten and torn by Cerberus. The avaricious and the prodigal roll enormous weights with their breasts, and the two classes of sinners clash and bruise each other. The unconcerned,<sup>1</sup> the wrathful, the envious, and the proud are fixed in a black, fetid slime; in their madness they beat and bite themselves and each other, or else, submerged, gurggle forth sighs from the bottom of the mire. Among them the Poet finds Filippo Argenti.

At the entrance of the city of Dis, the travellers meet with resistance from the devils and Furies (*Erinyes*), who shut the gates in their faces, so that these have to be opened by the wand of a messenger from heaven. Inside, in a vast cemetery, are the heretics, whose punishment is that they are burnt in red-hot coffins, enveloped in flames. Among them are Farinata degli Uberti and Cavalcante Cavalcanti.

Then come those who have sinned through malice; that is, the violent and the fraudulent. Violence may be exercised toward three persons: (1) toward one's neighbor, (2) toward one's self (in either case, in person

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[<sup>1</sup> *Accidiosi*: this word is usually translated *slothful*; but this is not really its meaning. *Accidia*, the vice of the *accidiosi* (from Greek ἀκηδία, Church Latin *acedia*: see Cicero, *Litt. ad Atticum*, XII, 45), means unconcern, want of enthusiasm; indeed, almost what we now call Philistinism. Thomas Aquinas makes *acedia*, with envy, the opposite of the joy of charity or love, and defines it as a "disinclination toward divine good, which by charity ought to be loved" (*tristitia de bono divino, quod secundum charitatem diligendum est*). — *Sum. Theol.*, II<sup>2</sup>, q. XXXV, art. i.]

or property), (3) toward God, either directly, or in nature, or in art. Fraud may be committed in two ways: (1) either by destroying the natural bond of love, as is done by panders and seducers, by flatterers, simoniacs, soothsayers and sorcerers, cheats, hypocrites, thieves, evil counsellors, scandal-mongers, sowers of schisms and discords, counterfeiters of metals, persons, money or testimony; or (2) in opposition to the bond of love and faith, as is done by traitors to parents, country, guests, masters or benefactors.

Cf. the Classification of Sins and the Division of Hell in the XIth Canto of the *Hell*.

The Violent against their neighbor, *i.e.*, tyrants, robbers, murderers, boil in blood, more or less immersed [according to their guilt], under the surveillance of centaurs armed with bows. The suicides, among whom is Pier delle Vigne, are changed into trees, on which the Harpies ruthlessly feed. The Violent against themselves in property are cruelly pursued and bitten by black dogs. The Violent against God, confined to a waste of burning sand, are burnt by a shower of great flakes of flame, some sitting, some running, some lying. Panders and Seducers, as they walk, are lashed by horned devils; Flatterers are plunged in excrement; Simoniacs are planted in the earth, with their heads down, and the soles of their feet on fire; Soothsayers and Wizards have their heads turned round on their shoulders, and walk looking behind them; Swindlers

boil, submerged in a lake of pitch, dreading at every moment the claws of devils ; Hypocrites walk about under great heavy cowls of gilded lead ; Thieves, bitten by poisonous and pestilential serpents, undergo frightful transformations ; Evil Counsellors wander about enveloped in living flames ; Scandal-mongers, Schismatics, and Strife-makers are cut, at every turn, in different horrible ways, with swords ; Counterfeiters of Metals, covered with leprosy and incrustated with scabs, ruthlessly rend each other, and are bitten by those who follow them ; Counterfeiters of Persons run in despair and madness, biting those who go before them ; Counterfeiters of Money suffer from dropsy and burning thirst ; Counterfeiters of Testimony stand one above another, tormented with burning fever ; finally, Traitors are frozen firm in ice, more or less deeply immersed according to the nature of their treachery, with the exception of Judas Iscariot, Brutus, and Cassius, who are mashed in the jaws of Lucifer.

This, in brief terms, is what Dante sees in the Kingdom of Damnation. Well may we admire the fertile imagination of the Poet who invented so many and such different punishments. But far more admirable is the keen psychologic and philosophic insight to which they bear testimony. The punishments in Dante's Hell are not merely the direct and immediate consequences of the different sins, but they are the sins themselves stripped of their false disguise. Thus Dante's Hell answers not only the question, What are the punish-



ments inflicted for sin in the other world? but also, and especially, the other question, What is sin? To this question all the damned in the different regions of Hell reply: "Sin is withdrawal from the Highest Good; it is unhappiness, misery, suffering, in time and in eternity." In the damned souls of Dante's Hell, therefore, we have the revealed truth of the conscience in time, and the revealed truth of life in eternity.

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[Witte, Karl: *Dante's Sündensystem in Hölle und Fegfeuer*, in *Dante-Forschungen*, Vol. II, pp. 121-60.

Tommasèo, Niccolò: *La Pena nel Concetto di Dante*, in *Nuovi Studi su Dante*. Turin, 1865, pp. 54-75.]

§ 7. PURGATORY, THE KINGDOM OF PENANCE. — Having come out from the shaft of Hell, upon the Islèt, “to revisit the stars,” Dante begins to go toward the mountain, across the abode of the Negligent. Here, being overtaken by the night, he falls asleep, and is taken up by Lucia, who deposits him at the foot of the ascent of Purgatory. He then passes through the Gate of Penitence and finds himself on the first ledge; then, ascending the mountain and going round it, always to the right, he passes from ledge to ledge, until he comes to the Divine Forest, where Virgil abandons him. Here he first meets Matelda, then sees a great procession coming toward him. Then Beatrice appears and sharply reproves him for his backsliding. The Poet repents, confesses, and is plunged in the river of Lethe. In a great vision, he is allowed to see the vicissitudes of the Church and the Empire; whereupon, having quaffed the delicious waters of Eunoe [*Eὐνοία*], he feels himself completely renewed, “pure and ready to ascend to the stars.”<sup>1</sup>

If the arrangement of the moral treatise of the *Hell* is essentially Aristotelian, that of the *Purgatory* is Platonic. The sins in the *Purgatory* are not looked at in their effects, but in their causes. Hence, they are

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[<sup>1</sup> “Puro e disposto a salire alle stelle.” — *Purg.*, XXXIII, 145. It is curious that all the three Canticles of *The Comedy* end with the same word, “stars” (*stelle*).]

all reduced to disorders of love.<sup>1</sup> Love disordered in its choice of the good, generates (1) a desire to domineer, by trampling upon one's fellows, that is, *Pride*; (2) a fainting of soul for fear of being abased, if another should be advanced, that is, *Envy*; or (3) a readiness to take offence, and to seek revenge for every little slight, that is, *Wrath*. Love disordered in its choice of the evil may be in defect or in excess. From the former springs lukewarmness in the quest of the true good, that is, *Unconcern* (Accidia); from the second spring (1) the immediate desire or abuse of riches, that is, *Avarice* and *Prodigality*; (2) the unregulated appetites of the palate, that is, *Gluttony*; and (3) the unbridled lust of the flesh, or *Luxury*. These are the seven deadly sins purged in the seven circles of Purgatory.<sup>2</sup>

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[<sup>1</sup> Nè Creator, ne creatura mai,  
 Cominciò ei, figliuol, fu senza amore,  
 O naturale, o d' animo; e tu il sai.  
 Lo natural fu sempre senza errore;  
 Ma l' altro puote errar (1) per mal oggetto  
 O (2) per troppo, or (3) per poco di vigore.  
*Purg.*, XVII, 91 sqq.]

[<sup>2</sup> Paolo Perez, in his admirable work, *I sette Cerchi del Purgatorio di Dante*, arranges the sins purged in Purgatory thus: —

- |  |   |               |
|--|---|---------------|
| 1. Sins of love erring in its object ( <i>per mal oggetto</i> )        | } | 1. Pride,     |
|  |   | 2. Envy,      |
|  |   | 3. Wrath.     |
| 2. Sin due to defect of vigor in love ( <i>per poco di vigore</i> )    | } | 4. Unconcern. |
|  |   |               |
| 3. Sins due to excess of vigor in love ( <i>per troppo di vigore</i> ) | } | 5. Avarice,   |
|  |   | 6. Gluttony,  |
|  |   | 7. Luxury.    |



On the spurs of the Sacred Mountain are found those who died under some ban or anathema, but who were converted on the point of death. Then, in the first circle, come the Negligent, divided into three classes. The first contains those who put off their conversion to God till the end of their lives, held back by the habit of crass laziness or sloth; the second, those who were cut off by a violent death, while presuming on a long term of life; the third, those who neglected the fulfilment of those highest duties for which they had a special mission here on earth. Their sin in this life is their punishment in the next. The negligent are neglected; hence the approach to the Kingdom of Purgation is not opened to them. One class has to wander round the mountain thirty times as long as they presumptuously remained in disobedience to the Church; another is prevented from entering Purgatory for as many years as they put off their repentance and remained in their inertia. Here we are still in the kingdom of punishment, of chastisement, not yet in that of purification. Before being admitted to the seven circles "where the human spirit is purged and becomes worthy to ascend to heaven,"<sup>1</sup> the souls of the negligent must, for a time, undergo privation of the grace of purification. Their

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Perez shows that this arrangement was borrowed from a little book of St. Bonaventura's *Speculum Beatae Virginis* (Lect. IV). *Op. Cit.*, p. 266. Compare Fazio degli Uberti's *Seven Deadly Sins*. These are arranged in this order: (1) Pride, (2) Avarice, (3) Envy, (4) Luxury, (5) Gluttony, (6) Wrath, (7) Unconcern.]

[<sup>1</sup> *Purg.*, I, 5 sq.]

punishment, therefore, bears a close resemblance to the punishments of Hell. They are punished exactly in the respect in which they sinned, that is, their sin is here revealed in its true, inner nature.

In the seven circles, the penitence consists in two things, (1) a Meditation, (2) a Punishment. The Meditation has for its objects the ugliness and sad effects of the sin committed, and the beauty and sweet fruits of the opposite virtues, and is accompanied by exercise in casting aside the vice and putting on the habit of the opposite virtue. Hence, the spirits undergoing purification either see with their eyes, or hear with their ears, examples of the fair virtues in which they must exercise themselves, and examples of punishment for the sins with which they were defiled during their life on earth. Again, each class of sinners has its own special punishment. The Proud learn to abase themselves, by walking on all fours and carrying very heavy weights. The Envious, clad in haircloth, have their eyelids sewed together with an iron wire, preventing them from casting an evil eye on the happiness of others. The Wrathful go round and round continually, tormented by a dense smoke which deprives them of vision. The Unconcerned run with eager haste, without stopping or resting. The Avaricious and the Prodigal weep bitterly, lying stretched out with their faces to the earth. The Gluttonous suffer hunger and thirst in the presence of food and drink. Finally, the Luxurious taunt each other mutually, in flames of burning fire. But these punish-

ments are pleasant to these souls, so ardent is their desire to become beautiful, and because their wills are already conformed to the Divine Will. Hence, one of them, after having spoken of his punishment, corrects himself, exclaiming, "I say *punishment*, and ought to say *recreation*." <sup>1</sup>

The great and glorious vision of the Earthly Paradise consists of two parts worked in together. On the one hand, the Poet shows here what God does for man's salvation, by means of the Church and the Empire; on the other, what man is bound to do for himself, if he desires to attain salvation.

Many readers of *The Comedy* get no farther than the first Cantic. So, while all are acquainted with the chief beauties of the *Hell*, e.g., the episodes of Francesca da Rimini, of the magnanimous Farinata degli Uberti, of Pier delle Vigne, Brunetto Latini, Guido di Montefeltro, Ugolino, etc., few are familiar with the beauties of the *Purgatory* and its splendid episodes, e.g., those of Buonconte da Montefeltro, of the Pia, of Sordello (with the magnificent apostrophe to Italy), of Sapia, of Arnaud Daniel, etc. Again, the last seven cantos, besides being perhaps the most sublime of all, in the vastness, grandeur, and profundity of their conceptions, are also, from a purely æsthetic and poetic point of view, the finest in the whole poem, and this despite the fact that everything in them is symbolical and allegorical, and it is not always easy to discover the "teaching that is hidden under the veil of the strange verses." <sup>2</sup>

The literature referring to the last cantos is catalogued in

[<sup>1</sup> Io dico *pena* e dovia dir *sollazzo*. Words of Forese Donati, *Purg.*, XXIII, 72.]

[<sup>2</sup> *Hell*, IX, 62 sq.]



my *Commentary on The Divine Comedy*, Vol. II, pp. 618 sqq. On the order which the Poet infused into the three Canticles, see

Lanci, Fortunato : *Dei spirituali tre Regni cantati da Dante Alighieri nella Divina Commedia*. Synoptical Analysis. Rome, 1855-56, fol.

On the penances in the seven circles, see especially

Perez, Paolo : *I sette Cerchi del Purgatorio di Dante*. *Saggio di Studi*. Verona, 1867, 12mo.<sup>1</sup>

§ 8. PARADISE, THE KINGDOM OF BLISS. — Beatrice gazes at the sun, Dante at Beatrice ; and so he ascends through the nine movable heavens, visiting the seven planets, in each of which certain blessed spirits appear, in order to manifest the various degrees of bliss enjoyed by them in the Empyrean, where they all are, and the influence of the respective heavens, which influenced them, as a secondary cause of their actions in life. With the exception of those of the lowest grade, the blessed spirits have no human semblance, as the damned and the penitent spirits have ; they are lights, which, growing in brilliancy, utter audible words. Having passed through the seven heavens of the planets, the Poet rises to the eighth, the Starry Heaven, and finds himself in the sign of the Twins, which he recognizes to be the secondary cause of all his genius.<sup>2</sup> In this, and in the

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[<sup>1</sup> This is perhaps the best book ever written on any part of Dante.]

[<sup>2</sup> O gloriose stelle, o lume pregno  
Di gran virtù dal quale io riconosco  
Tutto, qual che si sia, il mio ingegno.

— *Parad.*, XXII, 112 sqq.]

ninth or crystalline heaven, are revealed to him, in the guise of simple splendors, the Triumph of Christ and the Court of Heaven, which he afterwards sees all assembled in the Empyrean, in the form of a white rose, whose petals are the seats of the Blest. Above is God, effulgent and surrounded by the nine circles of the three angelic hierarchies.<sup>1</sup> These circle round him with a velocity proportioned to their nearness to him, and each moves, with a different informing virtue, the heaven committed to it; so that the angelic circles least swift and farthest removed from God, move the heavens that are slowest and nearest to the earth. The mystic journey and the *Sacred Poem* close with the beatific vision of God.

See Caetani, Michelangelo: *La Materia della Divina Commedia*. Explanation of Tab. VI.

Instead of action, which is almost wanting in the *Paradise*, we have hymns of praise, discussions, questions propounded and answered. Dante's *Paradise*, being the Bliss of the Intellect, which consists in the knowledge and acquisition of the truth,<sup>2</sup> all those ques-

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[<sup>1</sup> In regard to these, see the author's *Commentary* to *Parad.*, XXVIII, 97-129. In *The Comedy*, Dante follows in this matter the Pseudo-Dionysius; in *The Feast* (II, 6), he departs both from him and from Gregory the Great, who had also given an arrangement of the angelic hierarchy.]

[<sup>2</sup> Compare the famous passage in Aristotle, *Metaph.* Δ, 7: 1072<sup>b</sup> 18 sqq. Aristotle distinctly maintains that the highest bliss consists in vision, and not in action. Compare also the remarks of Plotinus, that action is but a weaker form of vision or speculation (ὥστε τὴν κατὰ τὴν θεωρίαν πράξιν





images reflected from water or crystal, — like mirrored semblances.

Among the souls of those who performed great and laudable actions, so as to leave fame behind them, — souls which appear in the heaven of *Mercury*, — are the good Romeo and the Emperor Justinian, the latter of whom relates the wonderful history of the Roman eagle, and inveighs against the factions which abuse the sacred signal. Then follows a conversation on the Resurrection, on man's Redemption, and on the manner of it.

Prevented from rising higher, from having been inclined to foolish affections, the loving spirits, a crowd of lights moving rapidly in a circle,<sup>1</sup> appear in the heaven of *Venus*. Here Charles Martel, titular king of Hungary, describes his kingdoms and the disorders of his successors. Cunizza da Romano speaks against the Bishop of Feltre; Folco of Marseilles, against Florence and the court of Rome. The question is asked and answered: How can a bad and vicious son spring from a good and virtuous father?

Ascending to the heaven of the *Sun*, where the Doctors of the Church and other personages of great wisdom appear, the Poet sees, first, a circle of twelve stars, then, above this, another circle of stars, and, finally, a circle of new light and appearance around the other two. Here are narrated the lives of St. Francis

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[<sup>1</sup> Cf. the spirits in the first circle of Hell (V, 28 sqq.). Circular motion, being the perfect motion, has for its cause love, the perfect act of the soul.]

and St. Dominic, and bitter reproaches are hurled against the disorders of the Franciscans and Dominicans. The questions here propounded and answered are: (1) How is it that, in wisdom, no second like to Solomon arose in the world?<sup>1</sup> (2) Will the Blessed, after resuming the flesh, continue in their disembodied splendor, without injury to their vision?

We come now to the heaven of *Mars*. Upon the body of the planet, behold a cross formed of an infinite number of the Blessed, represented by points of dazzling light, and on that cross, Christ flashing like lightning! Here are the redeemed souls of the heroes and doughty warriors who fought against the Infidels. Here the knight Cacciaguida, Dante's great-great-grandfather, tells the history of himself and his descendants, and draws a magnificent picture of Old Florence, predicts to the Poet the miseries of exile, and encourages him to write the truth freely, without any human regard.

The souls of those who, on earth, loved and exercised justice appear in the heaven of *Jupiter*, as stars writing the words *Diligite Justitiam qui judicatis Terram*,<sup>2</sup> and resting on the last letter, *M*, which, thereupon, transforms itself, first into a lily, and then into an eagle. This eagle speaks in a marvellous way, reproving the vices of many sovereigns, and praising some ancient kings, who were remarkable for extraordinary justice.

[<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings, III, 12.]

[<sup>2</sup> Love Justice, ye that judge the earth. — *Book of Wisdom*, I, 1.]

In the abode of Justice, Justice is discussed, and these questions asked and answered: (1) Is it possible to attain eternal happiness without the Christian faith, and by living according to mere natural law? (2) How comes it that the Poet sees in Paradise some who, in his belief, had not professed the Christian faith?

In the seventh heaven, that of *Saturn*, appear the hermits and solitaries, who had devoted themselves to the contemplative life. The Poet beholds a very lofty stair, stretching away toward heaven, beyond his range of vision; and on this innumerable bright spirits ascend and descend. Here are St. Peter Damiano and St. Benedict, the former of whom gives an account of his life and conversion, whereas the latter inveighs against the degenerate and corrupt clergy.

Having ascended the mystic stair, along with Beatrice, Dante sees, in the Starry Heaven, the Triumph of Christ, and is questioned by the three chief Apostles regarding Faith, Hope, and Charity. Here Adam speaks of his first abode, and of the primitive language; here resounds the terrible sermon of St. Peter against evil pastors. Hearing this sermon, all the saints in Paradise change color. In the *Primum Mobile*, where the Poet sees the Divine Essence, surrounded by the angelic choirs, Beatrice, in her turn, inveighs against evil pastors and preachers, and then returns to her place in the Empyrean, where the vision of the ineffable mystery of the Trinity closes the mystic journey.



*The Comedy* may be compared to the Temple of Zion, with its three divisions: the Court, the Holy Place, and the Most Holy Place. The Most Holy Place is the *Paradise*, the most sublime of the three Canticles. Nay, it resembles the Most Holy Place also in this, that no one enters it but the priest, and he only once a year. See, with regard to this, Dante's own words, in the proem to the second canto of this Canticle.

[§ 9. DURATION OF THE ACTION OF THE POEM. — “On the night before Good Friday (the night of the 24 / 25 March, 1300), Dante is wandering about, lost in the Forest. On the morning of Friday, he tries to ascend the Hill, goes back, and then stops to converse with Virgil. On the evening of that day, the two poets enter Hell. On the evening of the following day, that is, Saturday, they arrive at the last circle, called the *Giudecca*. At half-past one on the morning of Sunday (that is, Easter), they find themselves at the entrance of a great cavern leading to the other hemisphere. The whole day and night of Sunday are spent on this subterranean journey. On Monday, an hour and a half before daybreak, they come out and again behold the stars, on the side opposite to Hell, that is, at the foot of the mountain of Purgatory. Thus the first Canticle of the poem occupies four nights and three days.

“In traversing Purgatory, Dante spends four nights and four days, that is, the day and night of the Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday after Easter. The first begins with the second canto: *Già era il Sole*

*all' orizzonte giunto*; the second with the ninth canto (v. 13): *Nell' ora che comincia i tristi lai*, when the poets, having passed the Antepurgatory, find themselves in the Vale of the Negligent; the third at the beginning of the nineteenth canto: *Nell' ora che non può il calor diurno*, before the poets leave the circle of the Unconcerned; the fourth begins almost at the end of the twenty-seventh canto, when, the two having reached the top of the mountain, Virgil says to Dante (v. 133), *Vedi il Sol che in la fronte ti riluce*. About noon, they reach the source of Lethe and Eunoe, and the remainder of this day must be supposed to be spent in going to, and returning from, Eunoe, since the Poet, continuing his subject and his journey without interruption, says, in the first canto of the *Paradise* (v. 43), that the sun had risen: *Fatto avea di là mane, e di qua sera*. Seven days and eight nights, therefore, are passed between the opening of the poem and the close of the second Canticle.

“The days Friday and Saturday, as we see from canto XXVII, 79–87, are spent in traversing the nine movable heavens, and on Sunday, a week after Easter, he rises to the Empyrean. Thus, the whole action of the poem lasts ten days.” — Fraticelli, *La Divina Commedia*, Florence, 1877, p. 723.]

§ 10. IMITATORS. — If Dante's poem had its ancestors in the biblical writers, in the Poets of ancient civilization, in the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, and in

the legends and traditions of the Middle Age, it has also had its descendants in great number, a posterity equal to that promised to the patriarch Abraham, innumerable as the stars of heaven. In Italian literature subsequent to Dante, we hardly find a work of art of any moment that does not bear the imprint of the omnipotent influence of Dante's poetry. The *terzine*, invented by Dante, became the ordinary metre of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries for all lofty and solemn, and even for merely lengthy, subjects, occupying for a time the place afterwards held by the *ottava rima*, and by blank verse. Among the imitators of Dante must be reckoned the supreme poets<sup>1</sup> of all succeeding ages, beginning with Petrarch, who, in spite of himself, had to submit to Dante's influence in his *Rime*, and became a voluntary imitator of him in the *Trionfi*, down to the genial poet to whom Italy to-day accords the first place among her living poets.<sup>2</sup>

Great is the number of poems, both old and new, which are merely imitations, more or less successful, of *The Divine Comedy*. Several lie still unedited, in libraries, *e.g.*, the *Inferno* of Armannino, the *Landreide* of Giustiniani, the *Anima Peregrina* of Father Sardi, the *Visione* of Giambino d' Arezzo, the *Giudizio Finale* of Domenico di Napoli, the *Giardino* of Marino Lonata, the *Città di Vita* of Matteo Palmieri, and many more.

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[<sup>1</sup> This refers, of course, only to Italian poets. Shakespeare and Goethe are, in no sense, imitators of Dante.]

[<sup>2</sup> Giosuè Carducci.]



Among the published poems which are substantially only imitations of Dante, the best known are the *Amorosa Visione* of Boccaccio, in which both the design and the machinery of *The Comedy* are imitated; the *Dittamondo*<sup>1</sup> of Fazio degli Uberti, the grandson of the Farinata whom Dante condemned to his poetic Hell; the *Quadriregio* of Frezzi, who mixed up and reconstructed *The Divine Comedy* after his own fashion, under the pretence of completing it; the *Purgatorio* of Cipriani, who, being a better Hellenist than poet, attempted a flight alongside the great master; the *Basvilliana* of Monti, which won him the title the civilized Dante (*Dante raggentilito*); the *Scala di Vita* of Ferrucci, the closest and most successful imitator of Dante in our age. Less known are the *Inferno della Tirannide* of Bellini, the *Paradiso* of Antonio del Bon, and the numerous parodies of *The Comedy* and of its different parts.

And it is not alone in Italian literature that we find imitators of Dante. All the literatures of all the civilized peoples of Europe have drunk at this inexhaustible spring of all the most sublime inspiration — especially those of the southern peoples. Alfieri called Dante the Great Father Alighieri; and, indeed, he is the father of modern poetry, the prince of modern art.

Ferrazzi, G. J.: *Manuale Dantesco*, Vol. IV, pp. 255–64, 566–68; Vol. V, pp. 181–82, 865–69.

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[<sup>1</sup> See some curious extracts from this, translated in D. G. Rossetti's *Dante and his Circle*, pp. 433–41.]

Palesa, Agost. : *Dante. Raccolta*. Trieste, 1865, pp. 37 sqq.

Carducci, G. : *Studi Letterari*. Leghorn, 1874, pp. 312-62.

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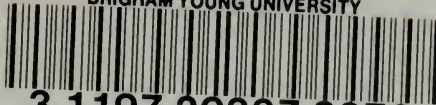
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